

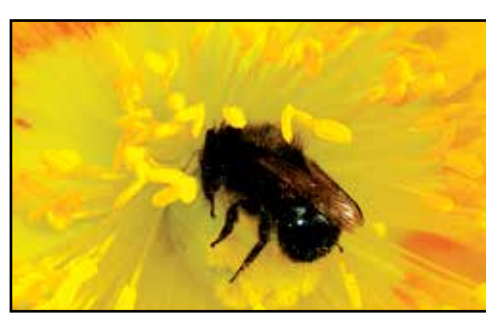


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Dixon Independent Voice

The Official Newspaper of Record for the City of Dixon

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Giving Tree Supports School Pantries



The Dixon Chamber of Commerce recently launched its second annual Giving Tree fundraiser, an effort aimed at supporting local school-based resource pantries and collecting non-perishable food for families in need during the holiday season.

Story and photo by Kendall Brown

DIXON, CA (MPG) - The Dixon Chamber of Commerce recently launched its second annual Giving Tree fundraiser, an effort aimed at supporting local school-based resource pantries and collecting non-perishable food for families in need during the holiday season.

The fundraiser, which runs through Dec. 15, will benefit the Dixon High Rams Vault, Maine Prairie High Vault and the Anderson Roadrunner Nest. The Dixon Chamber of

Commerce has set a combined fundraising goal of \$3,000, or \$1,000, for each program.

"Our second annual Giving Tree started Nov. 3 and this year has some additional options," said chamber manager Sara Echarte. "Come by the chamber Monday through Thursday between 8 a.m. and 11 a.m. to make a donation. If you can't make it during these hours, you can send Venmo and we will hang your ornament for you. No donation is too small."

The Giving Tree fundraiser originated with the chamber's networking connections group, which meets on

the first Thursday of each month. According to Echarte, the group launched the original event in 2024 to strengthen support systems for students and families and intends to continue the Giving Tree as an annual tradition.

"They first put the fundraiser together to help the community and they want it to continue on for years to come," said Echarte. "They've also added a food donation barrel to benefit Cornerstone Church. We've already had a full barrel collected, which is awesome."

Continued on page 4

Congregations Share Christmas Traditions

By Kendall Brown

DIXON, CA (MPG) - Dixon churches are preparing a variety of holiday events, services and community traditions as the Christmas season approaches.

Freedom Church at 470 E. H St. is partnering with Dixon Professional Firefighters Local 4665 for the annual 2025 toy drive. All donated toys will be distributed to children and families in the Dixon area. Donors can contribute by scanning the QR code on promotional materials for drop-off locations. Local businesses interested in hosting a collection bin can contact the fire union or the church. Freedom Church will also hold a special Christmas service, "Christ is Born" at 10 a.m. Dec. 21. For more information, visit freedomchurchdixon.com or call 707-693-1774.

Dixon United Methodist Church plans several events on Christmas Eve. The church will host "Faith and Frapp" from 4 to 5 p.m. Dec. 24 at Starbucks, 1450 Ary Lane, Suite F. Two Christmas Eve services will follow at the church, 209 N. Jefferson St., from 5 to 6 p.m. and 7 to 8 p.m. Details can be found at dixonumc.org or by calling 707-678-2191.

Living Hope Church at 410 Gateway Drive, will continue its regular weekly Bible study from 7 to 8 p.m. Dec. 24, which falls on Christmas Eve. Led by Pastor Jeff Myers, the study offers participants an opportunity to explore scripture in a group setting. The church has not yet announced its Christmas service schedule. Information is available at livinghopedixon.church-center.com/home or by calling 707-693-1512.

St. Peter's Catholic Church at 105 S. Second St. will observe several traditional celebrations throughout December. The parish will mark the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe with events beginning Dec. 7, including a 1 p.m. procession followed by Mass and a gathering in the parish hall. There will be no 3 p.m. Mass that day. Additional observances continue Dec. 12, starting with 5 a.m. worship and 6 a.m. menudo in the lounge. The parish noted that volunteers are needed for preparation efforts. St. Peter's offers Masses in both English and Spanish. For more information, visit stpeterschurchdixon.com or call 707-678-9424.

Cornerstone Baptist Church at 185 W. Cherry St. is conducting a winter coat drive alongside

Continued on page 4

Dixon Theater Debuts New Christmas Show

By Kendall Brown

DIXON, CA (MPG) - Dixon Community Theater (DCT) will open its holiday production, "Dixon's Great Big Little Christmas Show," with three performances Dec. 5 to Dec. 7 at the Dixon Performing Arts Center, 555 College Way.

Shows are scheduled for 6:30 p.m. Dec. 5 and 2 p.m. Dec. 6 and 7.

Kelly Pidgeon James, Dixon Community Theater vice president and the show's scriptwriter, said the company wanted to feature performers from multiple age groups.

"We wanted to do another show that incorporated multigenerational singers and actors," said James. "It was initially going to be an all-adult production but Christmas is for kids. It's a mix between a play and a cabaret, so it's a show built around singing and performing."

The tone of the production differs from last year's holiday offering, according to James.

"It's a comedy, it definitely has a funny script to it and it has the Christmas morals intertwined,"



The cast includes returning and new performers, such as Layla Wood, Matthew Popovitz, Angi Wolf, Angie Abrew, Bentley Abrew (pictured), and many others. Photo by Nicolas Brown

said James. "We have some incredible singers involved. Anything uplifting is what we were going for this time of year."

The show features an original script, which

James said sets the production apart from other regional seasonal offerings.

"It's an original script. Never been seen before," said James. "You're seeing a lot of the same shows

in other local theaters but DCT has done four original shows this year."

The cast includes returning and new performers. Among them are Bentley Abrew, Layla Wood, Matthew Popovitz, Angi Wolf and Angie Abrew. James said that the ensemble also includes performers from outside of Dixon, including performers connected to Davis Musical Theatre Company. Founded in 1984 by Jan Donowitz and Steve Isaacson, Davis Musical Theatre Company is recognized as California's longest-running, year-round amateur musical theater company.

Nineteen songs are included in the production. Most pieces will be performed to music tracks but the show will also feature live accompaniment from music director and pianist Jacob Fennell of Davis Musical Theatre Company.

James said community participation is a major component of this year's production. The Dec. 6 performance offers free admission for families who bring a new, unwrapped

Continued on page 3

Jingle All the Way to Santa's Village

New Holiday Experience on River Fox Train Unveiled

By Seth Henderson

WEST SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - The River Fox Train's Magical Christmas Train has been entirely transformed, providing guests an opportunity to visit Santa's Village, sing songs and celebrate the holidays along the way from Nov. 28 until Dec. 28.

The River Fox's 10-milelong track, originally opening in 1911, features more than a train ride, as guests deboard from the train into a "snowy" holiday scene with opportunities to buy gifts, meet Santa and take memorable photos.

"The Magical Christmas Train is one of the most enchanting times of the year," said Robert Jason Pinoli, president and CEO of Mendocino Railway, parent company of the River Fox Train. "For decades, this experience has brought families and friends together to pause the hustle and bustle of everyday life and share a moment of wonder. It is a cherished tradition that continues to grow, offering a place where guests can reconnect, laugh and create lasting memories."

The journey to Santa's village takes about an hour to complete and hot chocolate is provided in keep-sake mugs. Each train car is decorated with a theme, corresponding with a ticket. River Fox Train team members dress as Santa's elves energetically chorale through the car, encouraging guests to sing along in various Christmas carols.

Children on board can write letters to Santa while on board and Mrs. Claus makes an appearance through each car, greeting guests throughout the journey.

"We would love to



As the train departs, Santa's elves spring into action, filling each car with laughter, song and pure holiday fun. Photo courtesy of the River Fox Train

have people come and make it a tradition in their families and recognize them every single year when they come back," public relations manager Kim Preciado said. "Just leaving a magical impression on them." The Magical Christmas Train is for guests of all ages, featuring a bar car on the train, serving alcohol to attendees 21 or older. Smoking and vaping is not permitted on the train and at the boarding station. Guests are encouraged to arrive 30 minutes prior to departure and parking is free. Standard tickets for ages three and up are \$74.15 and infants with lap seating only are \$12. The River Fox Train is located at 18095 County Road 117 in West Sacramento. To learn more about the Magical Christmas Train or other events from the River Fox Train, visit riverfoxtrain.com/experiences/magical-christmas-train. Follow the River Fox Train on social media at [facebook.com/RiverFoxTrain](https://www.facebook.com/RiverFoxTrain) and [instagram.com/sacramentoriverfoxtrain](https://www.instagram.com/sacramentoriverfoxtrain).

Built in 1911 by the Northern Electric Company, the River Fox Train's 10-mile track originally transported passengers throughout the Sacramento area. While electric passenger service ended in 1941, the line continued operating with diesel freight, linking the fertile farmlands of the Sacramento Valley with markets across California. In 2003, Sierra Railroad merged with the Yolo Shortline, maintaining freight service and reviving passenger excursions under the name Sacramento River Train.

Today, the line operates as the River Fox Train under Mendocino Railway, a Class III common carrier, and the line continues to be used in interstate commerce.

A sister line to the world-famous Skunk Train built in 1885, the River Fox Train offers a blend of history and experience with scenic railbike rides, relaxing beer and wine trains, and festive holiday adventures that celebrate the nostalgic charm of California rail travel. ★

Built in 1911 by the Northern Electric Company, the River Fox Train's 10-mile track originally transported passengers throughout the Sacramento area. While electric passenger service ended in 1941, the line continued operating with diesel freight, linking the fertile farmlands of the Sacramento Valley with markets across California. In 2003, Sierra Railroad merged with the Yolo Shortline, maintaining freight service and reviving passenger excursions under the name Sacramento River Train.

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Dixon News Briefs



The City of Dixon, in partnership with the Downtown Dixon Business Association (DDBA), is hosting yuletide festivities in the downtown area from 3 p.m. to 9 p.m. Dec. 6. Photo by Debra Dingman

By MPG Staff

Dixon Girls Softball Registration

Dixon Girls Softball has opened registration for the Spring 2026 season. Early registration ended Oct. 31, but regular registration began Nov. 1 and lasts until Dec. 31. Regular registration costs \$225. Dixon Girls Softball is also looking for dedicated and enthusiastic coaches to join their 12U Travel and 10U Select teams for the upcoming season.

For more information or to register, visit dixongirlssoftball.com or email infor@dixongirlssoftball.com. Coaching applications are available on the Dixon Girls Softball Facebook page.

A Magical Victorian Christmas

The City of Dixon, in partnership with the Downtown Dixon Business Association (DDBA), is hosting yuletide festivities in the downtown area from 3 p.m. to 9 p.m. Dec. 6. The event will include a stationary parade of Christmas floats and tractors, a special appearance from Santa, live music, train rides, vendors and the tree lighting at 7 p.m. in Women's Improvement Park, 220 N. Jefferson St. Notably, First Street/CA 113 will be closed between East C Street to East Mayes throughout the event.

For more information, visit downtown-dixon-ca.com or call 707-678-8400.

Festival of Trees

Kiwanis Club of Dixon is hosting the festival of trees from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Dec. 13. Held in Dixon High School's small gymnasium, 555 College Way, the event offers a festive atmosphere and the chance for Dixon, Solano and Yolo citizens and business owners to sponsor or decorate a tree to be displayed on the day of the event. Proceeds from the event go to Dixon High School's Rams Vault, as well as both the high school and middle school band programs. Tree decoration will be held from 1:30 to 8 p.m. Dec. 12. The organization is also looking for donations of baked finger foods for the event.

For more information, visit the Kiwanis Club of Dixon, CA Facebook page or call 707-635-3303.

Winter Coat Drive

Cornerstone Baptist Church of Dixon is hosting a winter coat giveaway from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Dec. 13. Hosted at the church, 185 W. Cherry St., organizers will be hosting a drive to gather donated coats from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Dec. 6 and 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Dec. 7. Organizers are seeking both adult and kid coats, new or clean/gently used. If drop-off times don't work, donors are encouraged to call 707-678-5234.

For more information, visit cornerstoneindixon.com/events or contact office@cornerstoneindixon.com.

Dixon Library Book Club

Dixon Library is hosting its monthly morning book club meeting from 11 a.m. to noon Dec. 11. The morning book club is a monthly, adult-oriented group that will

be reading "The Frozen River" by Ariel Lawhon. Coffee and tea will be provided for attendees, and the meeting itself will be in the library's front room, 230 N. First St.

For more information, visit solanolib.org or call 1-866-572-7587.

Spaghetti Feed Fundraiser

Dixon Rams Youth Cheer is hosting a spaghetti feed fundraiser from 4 to 8 p.m. Dec. 12. Held at American Legion Hall, 1305 N. First St., proceeds from the event will support the Mighty Mite and Pee wee squads' trip to Nationals. Tickets cost \$20 per person or \$70 for a family four-pack and include spaghetti, salad and garlic bread. The event will also feature raffle prizes and a cake walk. Tickets may be purchased with cash or through Venmo at @DixonYFC.

For more information, visit [dixonycfc.com](https://www.dixonycfc.com) or email cheer@dixonycfc.com

Second Annual Giving Tree

The Dixon Chamber of Commerce is holding its second annual Giving Tree through Dec. 15. Hosted at the chamber, 220 N. Jefferson St., donations can be made in person Monday through Thursday from 8 to 11 a.m., or by Venmo. Beneficiaries include the Dixon High Rams Vault, Maine Prairie High Vault and the Anderson Nest. Ornament donations range from \$5 to \$100. A nonperishable food barrel provided by Cornerstone Church will also be available.

For more information, visit the Dixon Chamber of Commerce Facebook page or call 707-678-2650.

Carols in the Tunnel

Grace Fellowship Church of Dixon will host Carols in the Tunnel at 7 p.m. Dec. 17. Held in the B Street train underpass tunnel next to the Chamber of Commerce, 220 N. Jefferson St., the event gives Dixonites the opportunity to meet with family, friends and neighbors for a joyful night of Christmas carols.

For more information, visit the Grace Fellowship of Dixon Facebook page or call 707-678-5700.

Pancakes with Santa

The Rotary Club of Dixon will host its annual Pancakes with Santa breakfast from 8 to 11 a.m. Dec. 6. Held in the Dixon High School multipurpose room, 555 College Way, admission is \$5, payable by cash or Venmo. Pets are not permitted.

For more information, visit the Rotary Club of Dixon, CA Facebook page or call 916-240-0147.

Annual Christmas Parade

Dixon's Annual Christmas Parade is scheduled for Dec. 13. Lineup begins at 4:30 p.m., with the parade starting at 5:30 p.m. Organizers report that the event will include food and toys, and coat donations will be collected for Dixon Family Services. The parade route will begin at East Parkway where participating vehicles will line up. The parade will end in Downtown Dixon.

For more information, visit the Dixon's Annual Christmas Car Parade Facebook page or call 707-628-9771. ★

Barking Orders and Fighting Crime

CHP's Newest Four-Legged Crime Fighters Officially Promoted To K-9 Officers

By MPG Staff

WEST SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - The California Highway Patrol (CHP) has added four new K-9 teams to its ranks, advancing the department's mission to provide safety, service and security to the people of California.

The graduating class includes three Belgian Malinois and one Dutch Shepherd. Each dog has been trained to apprehend offenders, detect illegal drugs and enhance officer and public safety.

"Police K-9s have proven their usefulness time and again in the situations officers face daily," said CHP Commissioner Sean Duryee. "They are hardworking, loyal partners who wake up each day ready to serve. Each of these specialized teams has dedicated time and effort to succeed on the streets, and we are excited to welcome them to our team."

Over the past 11 weeks, the four K-9 teams completed more than 400 hours of intensive training that met the standards set by the California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training. The K-9s, trained in criminal apprehension and narcotic detection, received their official certification Nov. 7 during a graduation ceremony at the CHP Academy in West



Pictured is Officer Joshua Walker and K-9 Jury of the Inland Division. Photo courtesy of California Highway Patrol

Sacramento.

Each K-9 handler is an experienced CHP officer with seven to 15 years of service. Handlers were carefully paired with their canine partners based on temperament, skill and personality. During training, the teams built strong bonds of trust and communication that will support them throughout their careers.

Following graduation, the new K-9 teams will report to their assigned CHP Area offices to assist with patrol duties and respond to calls for service in the Northern, Central and Inland divisions.

With this graduating class, the second of 2025, the CHP now deploys 53 K-9 teams statewide, including 37 Patrol and Narcotics Detection Canine teams, nine Patrol and Explosives

Detection Canine teams, five Explosives Detection Canine teams and two Narcotics Detection teams.

From January through September 2025, CHP K-9 teams seized nearly 7,000 pounds of methamphetamine, 5,000 pounds of cocaine, 250 pounds of heroin, 750 pounds of fentanyl and 213 firearms, underscoring their critical role in combating drug trafficking and firearm-related crime.

To maintain peak performance, each team completes at least eight hours of ongoing training each week to ensure readiness for the diverse situations they encounter in the field.

The new K-9 teams include Officer Joshua Walker and K-9 Jury of the Inland Division, Officer Christopher Partlow and K-9 Judge of the Northern Division, Officer Christopher Keeler and K-9 Jag of the Central Division, and Officer Michael Galvez and K-9 Oso of the Central Division.

Learn more about becoming a CHP K-9 handler or explore other career opportunities at www.CHPMadeForMore.com. The mission of the California Highway Patrol is to provide the highest level of safety, service and security to the people of California. ★

Arrest Made in Halloween Shooting

Dixon Police Department News Release

DIXON, CA (MPG) - At approximately 11:55 p.m. Oct. 31, the Dixon Police Department received a report of a shooting in the 100 block of South First Street. Officers arrived on scene within minutes and located a 36-year-old male suffering from a gunshot wound. Officers provided immediate medical aid until Dixon Fire Department personnel arrived. The victim was transported to a local hospital, where he was treated for serious injuries and is continuing to recover, as of press time.

During the initial investigation, witnesses described the suspect as wearing a

mask and black clothing. Detectives from the Dixon Police Department continued to follow leads and develop information in the weeks that followed.

At approximately 9 p.m. Nov. 25, Dixon Police Department detectives, with assistance from the California Highway Patrol, arrested 32-year-old Zachary Buckner of Modesto in Manteca for violation of Penal Code 664/187, Attempted Murder. The arrest is directly related to the Oct. 31 shooting.

This remains an active investigation. Anyone with information regarding this case is asked to contact the Dixon Police Department Investigations Unit at 707-678-7070 or investigations@dixon-policeca.gov. ★

Friends of the Dixon May Fair to Award \$31,000 in College Scholarships



Massimo Menicou of Vacaville won the 2025 JoAn Giannoni Scholarship of \$8000, named for the Friends of the Dixon May Fair's former longtime secretary of Dixon. This is the second highest award given by the Friends in its Donnie and Tootie Huffman Scholarship Program. He is pictured with Carrie Hamel of Dixon, scholarship chair. Photo courtesy of Kathy Keatley Garvey

Kathy Keatley Garvey, UC Davis Department of Entomology and Nematology

SOLANO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - The Friends of the Dixon May Fair will award nine college scholarships totaling \$31,000 in its 2026 Donnie and Tootie Huffman Scholarship Program, open to Solano County high school graduates who are majoring in an agricultural field in either a university or community college within the United States.

Applications are now being accepted. The deadline to apply is March 1. Since 2003, the Friends have awarded \$306,750 in scholarships to Solano County residents majoring in agriculture, announced Carrie Hamel of Dixon, the scholarship chair. Initially only Solano County high school graduates attending college in California were eligible to enter.

In the four-year university or college category, available scholarships include the Donnie Huffman Presidential Scholarship Award of \$8,000, the JoAn Giannoni Scholarship Award of \$5,000, the Ester Armstrong Memorial Scholarship Award of \$4,000 and the Joe Gates Memorial Scholarship Award of \$3,500. Two Donnie and Tootie Huffman Scholarships, each worth \$3,500, are also offered.

In the two-year community college category, the available awards include the Jack Hopkins Scholarship Award of \$1,500 and two additional scholarship awards of \$1,000 each.

The Friends, an all-volunteer, service-oriented organization, is the fundraising arm of the Dixon May Fair. Headed by President Gilbert "Gil" Molina of Vacaville, the organization raises funds through the sale of beverages at the four-day fair, and donates the proceeds for building and grounds improvements, college scholarships and exhibitor awards.

Applicants are scored on personal, civic and academic experience; academic standing; personal commitment and established goals; leadership potential; and civic accomplishments. Most applicants have experience in 4-H, FFA or Grange-criteria desired but not mandated, Hamel said.

Continuing scholarship winners may apply up to four times, Hamel said. Scholarship checks can be used only for tuition, fees, books, materials and supplies, housing, and meals purchased on campus.

The 2025 recipients: Sam Esperson of Rio Vista, a member of the California Polytechnic Institute (Cal Poly) Class of 2026 and an agricultural systems management major, received the top award, the \$8000 Donnie Huffman Presidential Scholarship. Esperson, a 2022 graduate of Rio Vista High School, is also a previous recipient of the presidential award.

Massimo Menicou of Vacaville won the \$5000 JoAn Giannoni Scholarship, named for the Friends' former longtime secretary of Dixon. Menicou, a 2024 graduate of Vacaville High School, and a student at

University of Nevada, plans to become a veterinarian. He also is a previous award recipient.

Elena Mendonsa of Vacaville, a student at Chico State University, won the \$4000 Ester Armstrong Memorial Scholarship. A 2024 graduate of Vacaville Christian High School, she is majoring in animal science and plans to become a veterinarian. The Armstrong scholarship memorializes a former director of the California Division of Fairs and Expositions who died in 2009 of cancer. Armstrong served as interim chief executive officer of the Dixon May Fair from 2006 to 2009.

Cody Barr of Dixon won the \$3500 Joe Gates Memorial Scholarship, memorializing the longtime auctioneer of the Dixon May Fair Junior Livestock Auction. Barr is a member of the Dixon High School Class of 2025 and was accepted at Utah State University, where he is majoring in agribusiness, with an emphasis in farm and ranch management. Gates, a Rio Vista resident, died of COVID in February 2021.

Brianne Castelli of Dixon won a \$3500 Donnie and Tootie Huffman Scholarship. She is a member of the Dixon High School Class of 2025 and a student at Montana State University. She plans to become a veterinarian.

Payton King of Fairfield won a \$3500 Donnie and Tootie Huffman Scholarship. A member of the Rodriguez High School Class of 2025, Fairfield, she was accepted at the University of Minnesota, Crookston, and is majoring in agricultural business.

In the community college category, Vincent Perry of Vacaville received the \$1500 Jack Hopkins Memorial Scholarship. A member of the Vacaville High School Class of 2025, he was accepted at Butte College and is majoring in agricultural business. Hopkins (1922-2009), a fruit rancher and lifelong resident of Fairfield and Suisun, was a strong supporter of the Junior Livestock Auctions at the Dixon May Fair and Solano County Fair.

The application form can be downloaded from the Friends of the Fair Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/FriendsoftheDixonMayFair> or at <https://tinyurl.com/mwonn29vu>. For more information, contact Carrie Hamel at hamelc88@gmail.com or (530) 219-8090.

Completed application packets must be postmarked no later than 5 p.m. on March 1, 2026 and mailed to: Scholarship Committee, Friends of Dixon May Fair, P.O. Box 242, Dixon, CA 95620.

The scholarship committee, chaired by Hamel, also includes Tootie Huffman, Linda Molina, Kathy Keatley Garvey, and Kristy Vasquez all of Vacaville, and Sue Miracle and Michelle Robinson of Dixon.

The scholarship program was named the Donnie and Tootie Huffman Scholarship Program in honor of the founding president Donnie Huffman (1940-2023), and his wife, Tootie, the founding treasurer. Donnie died June 17, 2023 after a long battle with cancer. Tootie continues as a Friends of the Fair volunteer. ★

Dixon Theater Debuts New Christmas Show



Dixon Community Theater will open its holiday production, "Dixon's Great Big Little Christmas Show," with three performances Dec. 5 to Dec. 7 at the Dixon Performing Arts Center, 555 College Way. Photo by Nicolas Brown

Continued from page 1

toy to donate to Dixon Family Services. The offer is limited to one free entry per family.

Students from Dixon Montessori Charter School will open the Dec. 5 show with a performance of "Hot Chocolate" from "The Polar Express."

The theater company will also participate in local holiday events, including the city's Christmas tree lighting and the Kiwanis Festival of Trees.

James said that the show reflects themes important to residents.

"It's very much a community-based show and incorporates locals, mostly from Dixon," said James. "The show is really about what makes Christmas important, like home, family and community."

She hopes audiences recognize the depth of local talent.

"I'm hoping they will see the deep talent pool here in Dixon," said James. "It went untapped for so long, so I'm hoping they really see the diversity of Dixon Community Theater. We try to cover

people of all ages."

Tickets for adults are \$15 and tickets for seniors and children under 12 are \$10. Tickets can be purchased at the door as online sales closed on Dec. 3.

James also encouraged families to participate in local holiday activities.

"Get out of the house, get out into the community, enjoy the many, many, many amazing events that Dixon puts on for families," said James. "We are so lucky we live in a town that celebrates the town itself."

James said that Dixon Community Theater, now entering its third year, is grateful for continued community support.

"We've been in operation for two solid years," she said. "A lot of nonprofits don't make it to one, so we're so grateful."

Auditions for the theater's first 2026 production, "The House of Frankenstein" by Martin Downing, are scheduled from 6 to 8 p.m. Dec. 15 and Dec. 16 at the new Veterans Memorial Hall, 1305 N. First St.

For more information, visit dixoncommunitytheater.org or call 707-903-8387. ★

Police Department Relaunches Bait Package Program to Thwart Porch Pirates

Dixon Police Department News Release

DIXON, CA (MPG) - Dixon Police Department is pleased to announce the return of our annual Bait Package Program, an effort designed to catch would-be "porch pirates" before they sail off with your holiday deliveries. As online orders climb, so does the temptation for thieves, and we are once again stepping up to keep Dixon porches safe.

Starting this week, officers will deploy GPS-equipped bait packages throughout the city. These ordinary-looking parcels are anything but ordinary. Once moved by someone with less-than-honorable intentions, the packages quietly alert our officers, who are already out in the community looking for pirates that may be prowling the neighborhood.

"We've been doing this for years, and each season we remain committed to deterring package theft and protecting our residents," Chief Robert Thompson noted. "The goal is simple: let everyone enjoy their deliveries without worrying about someone helping themselves."

To expand the reach of the program, we are seeking volunteer addresses where officers can safely and discreetly place bait packages. Participation is simple: residents who wish to help can email porchpirates@dixonpoliceca.gov. Selected homes will receive brief instructions and should keep the placement confidential to ensure the

success of the program.

While our undercover officers continue their search for porch-side buccaneers, we also encourage residents to track their deliveries, secure packages when possible and report suspicious behavior promptly to the Dixon Police Department.

Tips to Keep Your Packages Safe This Season

While our undercover officers are out keeping an eye open for pirate activity, residents can help protect their treasures with a few easy steps. Track your deliveries and bring them inside as soon as you're able. Provide delivery instructions asking carriers to leave packages in a less visible spot such as behind a gate or side porch. Use secure delivery options like lockboxes or designated package lockers when available.

Ask a trusted neighbor to grab your package if you're away or schedule deliveries for times when you know you'll be home, if the retailer offers it. Install doorbell or exterior cameras to help deter thieves and assist officers if anything suspicious occurs. Lastly, keep porches tidy. A clutter-free porch makes it easier for neighbors and officers to spot unusual activity.

Together, we can make sure porch pirates get nothing more than a lump of coal in their holiday haul this year.

For questions or participation, contact porchpirates@dixonpoliceca.gov or call Dixon Police Department at 707-678-7070. ★

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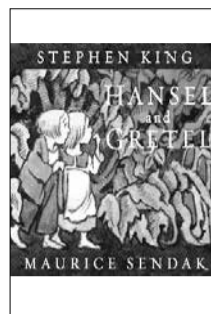


FOR THE LOVE OF BOOKS
By Amy Shane

BOOK REVIEW & SPECIAL EVENTS EDITOR • ✉ amy-shane@att.net • 📸 amy_fortheloveofbooks

Annual Holiday Gift Giving Guide

The Holidays are upon us, and books are the best gifts to give, creating lasting memories for children and grandchildren. To start this year's Annual guide, TvS Media Group hand-selects the perfect books for all ages.



Hunger Games Catching Fire and Sunrise on the Reaping

by Suzanne Collins; Scholastic

Relive the epic dystopian Hunger Games with the newest book in the illustrated series, Catching Fire, or the newest book, Sunrise on the Reaping. Scholastic books bring the beauty of their books with the new collector's edition of Sunrise on the Reaping, complete with a metallic cover, custom-printed endpapers, and stunning sprayed edges. The new illustrated hardcover gift edition of Catching Fire is also a show-stopping display. With its oversized coffee-table-book size, beautiful printed hardback, and illustrated pages, it is the perfect book for fans and new fans alike.

The Lemonade War

by Jacqueline Davies,

illustrated by Karen De La Vega; Clarion

Goosebumps House of Shivers

by R.L. Stine; Scholastic

For the middle-grade reader on your list, the graphic novel adaptation of The Lemonade War or Goosebumps New Series: House of Shivers. R.L. Stine returns to send shivers down the spines of a new generation. With their brightly illustrated covers and bone-chilling stories, there is plenty of new tales for any reader to sink their teeth into.

Summer is almost over, but the Lemonade Wars have just begun. The best-selling book by Jacqueline Davies is now available as a graphic novel. A clever blend of humor, math, marketing, and sibling rivalry.

This breakout series is a fan favorite and a perfect gift for the new graphic novel reader on your list.

Ms. Rachel by Ms. Rachel and Mr. Aron;

Random House

Hansel and Gretel

retold by Stephen King, pictures by Maurice Sendak; HarperCollins.

The gift of reading to a child is a gift that lasts all year long. Little ones will delight in the new book series by beloved children's show host Ms. Rachel. With 12 interactive button sounds, Ms Rachel takes little ones to the farm in A Day at the Farm. This fully interactive book will have little ones eager to follow along and be part of the story.

Ms. Rachel's stories continued in Ms. Rachel and Bean and the Bedtime Routine. Encourage little ones to drift off to sleep with this adorable new bedtime book. Help Ms. Rachel get Bean to bed with a step-by-step nighttime routine. With each step having meaning and a song, little ones will be eager to help create their own bedtime routine, and gently encourage themselves to fall asleep in a calm and comforting way.

For old and Young alike. Revisit an old classic with Hansel and Gretel retold by Stephen King and illustrated by Maurice Sendak. An all-new picture book combining the talents of two literary icons. This new interpretative tale blends the rich imagination of Maurice Sendak's illustrations with Stephen King's unparalleled storytelling. This story is perfect for young and old and is sure to be a new favorite classic read. ★



Riley Reviews

“THE RUNNING MAN” STILL FINDS ACTION WITHOUT THE TERMINATOR

A Film and TV Review by Tim Riley

“THE RUNNING MAN” RATED R

Arnold Schwarzenegger, former professional bodybuilder and erstwhile politician, remains to this day late in the eighth decade of his storied life an actor and producer, though not as prolific in this line of work as during his heyday.

The moniker of “The Terminator” will linger forever as his trademark. Even when he was California's leader, he was often called the Governor, maybe derisively, but nevertheless in recognition of his cinematic persona.

Nearly forty years ago, Schwarzenegger starred in the dystopian action thriller “The Running Man,” where memory serves, his character, Ben Richards, was a California police officer framed for a massacre of rioters and then falsely imprisoned.

The nation had turned into a totalitarian police state, where the government operated Soviet-style to control the populace through force, intimidation and media manipulation, while keeping the masses entertained through a popular game show called “The Running Man.”

Escaping from a prison labor camp along with a pair of resistance fighters, Richards was later recaptured and accepted an offer to participate in the game show where his survival depended on eluding “Stalkers” dispatched to kill him. It was all about entertaining the proletariat.

An interesting fact about 1987's “The Running Man” was that the movie was based on the 1982 novel of the same title written by Richard Bachman, who turned out to be the nom-de-plume of horror fiction writer Stephen King.

The 2025 remake of “The Running Man,” still based on Stephen King's book, stars Glen Powell (best-known for “Top Gun: Maverick” and “Hit Man”) as Ben Richards, with a backstory unlike that of the Schwarzenegger version.

For all the intensity, grit and determination he brings to the role, Powell is nonetheless not even vaguely like “The Terminator” in physical strength or the innate ability to utter cheesy one-liners.

The near future dystopian world now looks like a crumbling Detroit, where the masses endure desperate lives steeped in poverty, and relief from a bleak existence only comes in the form of the TV reality show where a runner can win one billion dollars if they survive for 30 days.

The challenge for a participant in the game show is to outwit and outrun a cadre of assassins called the “Hunters” and as well as bloodthirsty and despairing citizens eager to cash in on reward money.

The violent game show is run by the despotic media empire known as the “Network,” and the show is produced by Dan Killian (Josh Brolin, doing the best he can to be a cartoonish, smirking villain), whose motivation is delivering the best ratings for his show.

Not a policeman or prison escapee like Schwarzenegger, Powell's Richards is a working stiff, with a strong moral code, fired from his job for insubordination and overall hostility to authority.

Living in a cramped apartment in dreary Co-op City, Richards is distressed that his wife Sheila (Jayme Lawson) must work at a sleazy nightclub because the family can't afford the expensive medicine needed for their baby daughter suffering from a lingering flu-like illness.

While Richards promises his wife that he's not going to be a contestant on the most violent reality show, with the offer of the billion-dollar prize money no one has ever won, you already know he's reckless enough to take the plunge.

The interview process to be a contender is interesting alone. Hordes of downtrodden people are lined up to get on any show that offers a payout. A quick-thinking Richards uses his temper and bravado to get a jump ahead of the others.

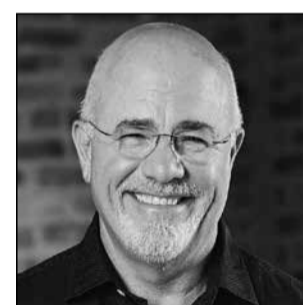
The contest for “The Running Man” requires at least three initial participants who fall into certain categories. Richards is joined by daredevil Jenni (Katy O'Brian), who looks like a punk rocker, and goofy Tim Jansky (Martin Herlihy), who would be lucky to survive more than two days.

Of course, the detestable Killian knows that the longer a contestant stays alive, and on the run, the greater the boost in ratings as the runner attains a celebrity-like image that fuels the lust of viewers to witness his demise.

Richards gets help from a variety of people, from an old friend (William H. Macy), who provides disguises and fake identities, to Michael Cera's writer of underground conspiracy pamphlets wanting to avenge his policeman father who was pushed out of the force for being an honest cop.

What if Richards becomes a folk hero and inspiration for rebellion against the tyranny of the Network? Is it possible that the masses, once satiated by a violent TV show, could turn to insurrection against authority? This could be where “The Running Man” is headed.

The original “Running Man” seemingly attained cult classic status in certain circles, notwithstanding that it's hardly rises above popcorn entertainment. The remake is likely to fall short of an exalted standing in the future, but at least, it works as mindless entertainment. ★



Dave Ramsey

Dave Ramsey Says She'll Be Just Fine

like she's not planning on using this money, but using the income *from* the money. If that's the case, she won't whittle it all down to nothing. So, if she's in good mutual funds—not single stocks—I think she'll be just fine.

Now, let's talk about the mortgage. I would absolutely recommend she go ahead and pay it off. If she can do that at age 76 and still have \$540,000 left, that's the way to go. Let's pay off the house, and then she can start taking her income off a percentage of the remainder. She won't need much with the house payment out of the way, because she won't be sending money to the bank to pay the anymore.

– Dave

The Best Laid Plans...

Dear Dave,

My wife and I have been talking about paying off our mortgage in the next two or three years. Do you think we should make this happen by paying extra toward the house, or invest that money on top of the 15% we're putting into retirement?

– March

Dear March,

If I were in your shoes, I'd pay extra on the house.

On the other hand, you're not really doing a *bad* thing by putting the extra cash it into retirement, either.

But here's the deal. No matter how well you plan, you never know exactly what will happen over the upcoming years of your life—or the life of your investments. You might *think* you know. You may even believe you've taken every possibility into account. The hard, cold truth, though, is even the best and smartest plans don't always work out the way we think they will—or the way we want them to.

And if something unplanned or unforeseen happens, it sure would be a nice thing to own your home free and clear, wouldn't it?

– Dave

Dave Ramsey is an eight-time national bestselling author, personal finance expert and host of The Ramsey Show. He has appeared on Good Morning America, CBS This Morning, Today, Fox News, CNN, Fox Business and many more. Since 1992, Dave has helped people take control of their money, build wealth and enhance their lives. He also serves as CEO for Ramsey Solutions. ★

Giving Tree Supports School Pantries

Continued from page 1

Several adjustments were made following the inaugural event, including expanded beneficiary programs and new ways for donors to contribute.

“They have added the Anderson Roadrunner Nest since it's new and, this year, we're allowing donors to contribute through Venmo,” said Echarte.

The Chamber of Commerce is finalizing an official Venmo account and donations can also be made through members of the networking committee, including Crystal Rico, Erin Johnston, Alisha Platt and Tori Hunt.

Community members can donate in person at the Chamber of Commerce office, 220 N. Jefferson St., or through networking committee members.

“You can contribute with cash, check or Venmo,” said Echarte. “Here, on the actual tree, we will write your name and donation down on a paper ornament and hang it on the tree.”

In addition to monetary donations, Cornerstone Church has supplied a

collection barrel for non-perishable food items. Residents are encouraged to bring canned goods when visiting the chamber.

The fund distribution is intended to help the school pantries meet basic needs, according to Echarte.

“I'm hoping that they can help fill the pantries so that we don't have anyone going without in our community, especially during the holidays,” Echarte said.

Donations might be tax-deductible and tax identification information or donation letters are available upon request.

Echarte encouraged residents who have not yet participated to contact the Chamber of Commerce or networking committee members.

“Reach out to one of us and we'll get you involved,” said Echarte. “It's easy, it's fun and it's rewarding.”

Local businesses and organizations that have contributed are also invited to promote the event on social media.

For more information, visit the Dixon Chamber of Commerce Facebook page or call 707-678-2650. ★

Congregations Share Christmas Traditions

Continued from page 1

its holiday services. The church will host a Christmas Candlelight Service from 10:30 a.m. to noon Dec. 21, featuring caroling, candle lighting and refreshments.

A Christmas Eve service is planned for 5 to 6 p.m. Dec. 24 at Pardi Plaza, 132 E. A St. Additional details are posted at cornerstoneindixon.com and are available by calling 707-678-5234. ★



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Congress Must Act Now

Rural Seniors Face Healthcare Crisis



Ronnie Janson is a board member of the nonprofit Golden Years Policy Council. Courtesy photo

**Commentary
by Ronnie Janson**

As a professional advisor with more than a decade of experience specializing in the financial security of California's elderly, especially in rural communities, I feel compelled to sound the alarm on an imminent crisis that threatens the very foundation of long-term care in our state.

Unless Congress acts swiftly, thousands of Californians could lose access to vital pharmaceutical services and long-term care.

This crisis stems from impending changes to Medicare Part D drug pricing, set to take effect on Jan. 1, 2026. While I support the worthy intentions of reforms to reduce prescription drug costs, these same reforms unintentionally put long-term care (LTC) pharmacies at risk. As many as 60% of LTC pharmacies could be forced to close at least one of their locations due to the new pricing model.

This could have catastrophic consequences, especially for rural seniors living in Butte, Yolo, Solano, Sacramento, Yuba and Colusa counties.

Long-term care pharmacies do far more than fill prescriptions. They provide a full suite of services that no retail pharmacy can match: 24/7/365 medication

management, patient-specific packaging and medication delivery. Nursing homes and assisted living facilities depend on these pharmacies to comply with federal requirements for safe, timely pharmaceutical care.

Nowhere is this interdependence more critical than in California's rural regions. One long-term care pharmacy might serve dozens of facilities spread across vast areas. If that pharmacy were to shut its doors, the ripple effects would be devastating. Nursing homes might be forced to close because they can no longer meet their legal obligations to residents. The result? In California, this means that the nearly 10,000 seniors in rural areas with long-term care needs are unable to access the services they currently depend on.

More than five-million Medicare beneficiaries rely on long-term care and one in

four reside in a facility that utilizes long-term care pharmacies. These patients are among the most medically vulnerable: individuals living with multiple chronic conditions, cognitive impairments or mobility limitations. They cannot simply switch to a local retail pharmacy. In many cases, there isn't one within driving distance and even if there were, retail pharmacies aren't equipped to provide the high-level services these patients require and only long-term care pharmacies can fulfill.

Fortunately, there is a solution and time is of the essence.

H.R. 5031 (Preserving Patient Access to Long-Term Care Pharmacies Act), a bipartisan bill currently before Congress, would create a modest \$30 flat fee for each Medicare Part D drug dispensed by a long-term care pharmacy. This fee

would offset the revenue shortfalls created by the new drug pricing system, ensuring that long-term care pharmacies can continue providing essential services. Importantly, this solution preserves drug cost savings for seniors while stabilizing the infrastructure required to deliver them.

Without action, we risk triggering a healthcare collapse in California's rural communities. We risk leaving our most vulnerable neighbors without access to medications, care or the dignity they deserve in their later years.

Pass H.R. 5031 and protect long-term care for the seniors.

Ronnie Janson is a board member of the nonprofit Golden Years Policy Council, which represents seniors and their families in Butte, Colusa, Sacramento, Solano, Yolo and Yuba counties. ★

LEGAL ADVERTISING
Dixon's Independent Voice Adjudicated For and By the County of Solano, Adjudication No. FCS030046 – November 24, 2008

Legal Advertising 916-483-0946 2508 Garfield Ave. • Ste. A
Carmichael, CA 95608

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENTS

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 2025001636 The following persons are doing business as: Dar Construction,

226 Essex Way, Benicia, CA 94510.

Radostin Ilyev and Dimitar Skulev, 226 Essex Way, Benicia, CA 94510. Date filed in Solano County: November 12, 2025. The Registrant commenced to transact business under the above business name on: November 9, 2010

This Business is conducted by: A General Partnership. 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 11, 2030. 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: Nov 21, 28, Dec 5, 12, 2025 DATED: 12-12-25

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 2025001662 The following persons are doing business as: Momentum Wayfinder Consulting, 368 Piercy Drive, Benicia, CA 94510. Jennifer Anne Bonner, 368 Piercy Drive, Benicia, CA 94510. Date filed in Solano County November 18, 2025. The Registrant commenced to transact business under the above business name on: N/A This Business is conducted by: An Individual. 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 17, 2030. 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: Nov 28, Dec 5, 12, 19, 2025 MOMENTUM 12-19-25

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 2025001673 The following persons are doing business as: IC Hot Dog, 1350 Travis Boulevard, Fairfield, CA 94533 April Phyo, 1930 Grande Circle Unit 68, Fairfield, CA 94533 Date filed in Solano County November 19, 2025. The Registrant commenced to transact business under the above business name on: November 12, 2025 This Business is conducted by: An Individual. 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 18, 2030. 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: Nov 28, Dec 5, 12, 19, 2025 HOT 12-19-25

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE CHANGE OF NAME

SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA COUNTY OF SOLANO ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE CHANGE OF NAME CASE #CU25-09592 James Matthew Gonzales-Harris. filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows: James Matthew Gonzales-Harris to James Matthew Harris THE COURT ORDERS that all persons interested in this matter shall appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted. Any person objecting to the name changes described above must file written objection that includes the reasons for the objection at least two court days before the matter is scheduled to be heard and must appear at the hearing to show why the petition should not be granted. If no written objection is timely filed, the court may grant the petition without a hearing. December 24, 2025, 9:00 a.m. Department 3, Room 3, Superior Court of California, County of Solano, Old Solano Court House, 580 Texas Street Fairfield, CA 94533 Judge of the Superior Court: Christine A. Carringer Dated: November 7, 2025 Publish: Nov 21, 28, Dec 5, 12, 2025 HARRIS 12-12-25



NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING OF THE CITY OF DIXON CITY COUNCIL

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF DIXON CONFIRMING THE ASSESSMENT FOR DELINQUENT TRANSIENT OCCUPANCY TAX ACCOUNTS AND DIRECTING A PROPERTY LIEN TO BE PLACED ON THE PARCEL

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the City of Dixon ("City") City Council will conduct a public hearing at a regularly scheduled meeting on Tuesday, December 16, at 7:00 p.m., at Council Chambers located at 600 East A Street, Dixon, California 95620, to receive public comment and consider placing a lien on a parcel with delinquent transient occupancy taxes. City of Dixon Municipal Code Section 4.06.060 provides the City the authority to collect past due transient occupancy taxes by placing a lien in the amount of the past due balance on the delinquent property. This process makes the past due amount subject to collection upon the sale or seizure of the property.

The resolution to be considered will authorize the Finance Director, or her designee, to request that the Solano County Recorder's Office record a lien against the respective property

Notices regarding this process were mailed to all delinquent accounts prior to this hearing.

ALL INTERESTED PARTIES are invited to attend the Tuesday, December 16, 2025 public hearing to express opinions or submit evidence demonstrating that you should be exempted from the lien process. Testimony from interested persons will be heard and considered by the City Council prior to taking action or making any recommendation on the resolution. Upon request, the agenda and the documents in the meeting agenda packet can be made available to persons with a disability. In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, the City encourages those with disabilities to participate fully in the regular meeting process. Any person requiring special assistance to participate in the meeting should call (707) 678-7000 (voice) or (707) 678-1489 (TTY) at least forty-eight (48) hours prior to the meeting. Any person requiring language interpretation services should call (707) 678-7000 (voice) or (707) 678-1489 (TTY) at least seventy-two (72) hours before the meeting.

Interested individuals will be given an opportunity to speak on the above proposed action. Written comments are also accepted prior to the meeting by mail at 600 East A Street, Dixon, CA 95620 or electronically by emailing Iruiz@cityofdixonca.gov. Information regarding the meeting is on file and may be provided to interested individuals upon request. If a challenge to the above proposed action is made in court, persons may be limited to raising only those issues they or someone else raised at the meeting described in this notice, or in written correspondence delivered to the City before the meeting.

Copies of the agenda packet and supporting documents will be available for public review at City Hall, 600 East A Street, Dixon, CA 95620, at least three (3) days before the meeting.

If you have any questions, please call the Administrative City Clerk at (707) 678-7000, ext. 1116.

BY ORDER OF THE DIXON CITY COUNCIL, KRISTIN M. JANISCH, ELECTED CITY CLERK
DATED: December 1, 2025

Dixon Independent Voice 12-5-2025

CITY OF DIXON

NOTICE TO CONTRACTORS

NOTICE IS GIVEN that the City of Dixon will receive Statements of Qualifications ("Pre-qualification Questionnaire" or "Questionnaire") for:

**GENERAL CONTRACTOR SERVICES FOR:
DIXON POLICE DEPARTMENT, SECOND STORY EXPANSION
PROJECT #420-103**

LOCATION OF WORK: 201 W A St, Dixon, CA 95620, Solano County.

DESCRIPTION OF WORK: The City of Dixon seeks to pre-qualify General Contractors ("Contractors") for the construction of the Dixon Police Department, Second Story Expansion ("Project"), and hereby invites sealed pre-qualification submittals from licensed Contractors.

Notice is hereby given that the City of Dixon has determined that Contractor(s) bidders on this Project must be pre-qualified prior to submitting a bid on this Project. The pre-qualification evaluation is solely for the purpose of determining which Contractors are deemed qualified to successfully construct the Project.

Only Contractors in possession of a valid Class A or B Contractor's license are allowed to bid on the Project.

It is **mandatory** that all Contractors who intend to submit a bid fully complete the pre-qualification questionnaire, provide all requested materials, and be approved by the City of Dixon to be on the final qualified bidders list.

FILING OF SUBMITTALS DUE: on or before 3:00 PM, Wednesday, December 17, 2025

There **will not** be a pre-submittal meeting.

Questions regarding any part of the pre-qualification questionnaire must be submitted in writing via e-mail to Andrew MacDonald, P.E., Consultant Engineer, at amacdonald@cityofdixonca.gov.

All written requests for questionnaire clarifications must be received no later than 2:00 p.m. on December 9, 2025.

A copy of the Request, Questionnaire, and all required materials may be obtained by logging on www.blueprintexpress.com/dixon or by calling BPXpress Reprographics at (707) 745-3593.

All contractors must submit their questionnaire and provide all requested materials online through the BPXpress bid portal to be considered responsive.

It is the sole responsibility of the Contractor to ensure that the questionnaire is received prior to the specified time and date.

Each questionnaire and requested materials must be submitted using the City of Dixon forms provided. Submittals may be withdrawn at any time prior to 3:00 p.m. on December 17, 2025.

A City of Dixon business license is required prior to awarding the project.

CONTRACTOR'S LICENSE AND CERTIFICATION OF WORKERS:

All Contractors shall be licensed under the provisions of the Business and Professions Code to do the type of work contemplated in the Project. In accordance with Public Contract Code section 3300, the City has determined that a Class A or B State contractor's license is required for this project.

In addition, the Contractor shall ensure that all workers, including workers employed by subcontractors, are properly trained and certified for the type of work they are performing throughout the term of the project.

LABOR CODE REQUIREMENTS:

Pursuant to Section 1770 et seq. of the California Labor Code, the successful bidder and all subcontractors shall pay no less than the rate of per diem wages as determined by the Director of the California Department of Industrial Relations. The prevailing rate and scale of wages of this contract is the determination made by the Director of Industrial Relations as applicable to Solano County. A copy of the Determination is on file at the office of the City Clerk.

The Contractor shall, in the performance of the work and improvements, conform to the Labor Code of the State of California and other laws of the State of California applicable hereto.

Pursuant to Section 1770 et seq. of the California Labor Code, the daily penalty for failure to comply with prevailing wage should be an amount not to exceed two hundred dollars (\$200). Additionally, the minimum penalty on each calendar day, for each worker paid less than the prevailing wage rate, may not be less than forty dollars (\$40), and eighty dollars (\$80) if the contractor or subcontractor has been assessed a penalty within the previous three years for failing to meet its prevailing wage obligations on a separate contract. A willful prevailing wage violation shall be assessed a penalty of between thirty dollars (\$30) and one hundred twenty dollars (\$120).

The work covered by this agreement is a "public work" as that term is defined in California Labor Code, Division 2, Part 7, and Chapter 1. Bidders are advised that if they intend to use a craft or classification not shown on the general wage determination, they shall be required to pay the wage rate of that craft or classification most clearly related to it, as shown in the determinations.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYMENT:

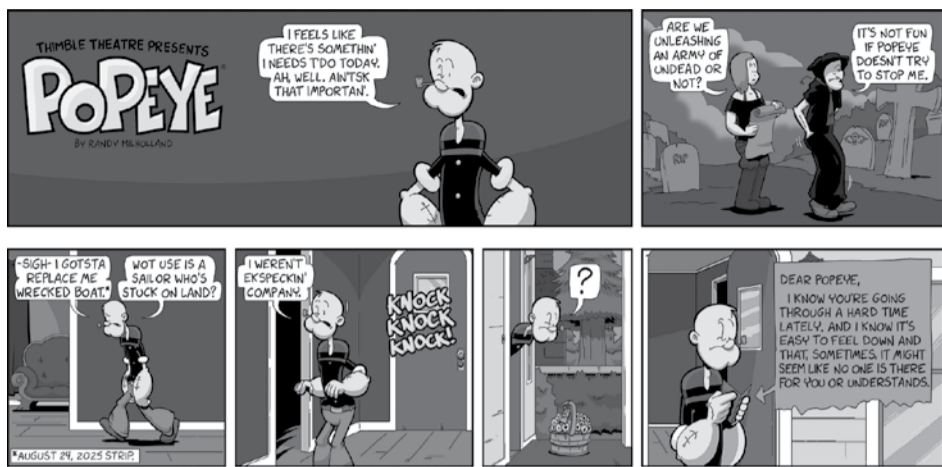
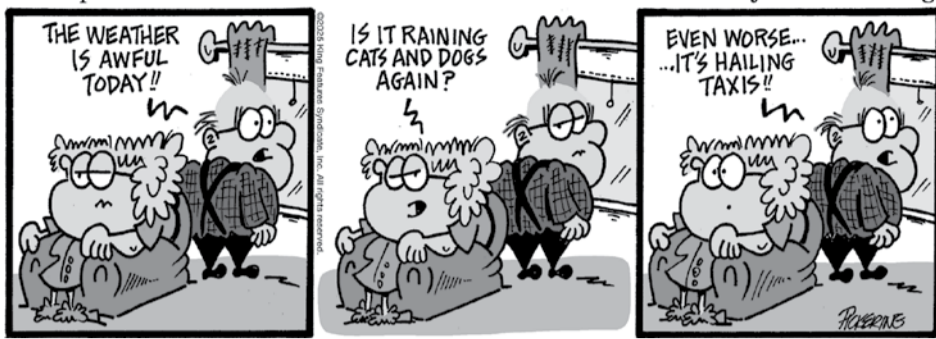
The City of Dixon is committed to the principle of equal employment opportunity and values diversity among all our team members. The City does not discriminate in employment decisions on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, veteran status, disability, age, marital status, medical condition, or any other legally protected status. We welcome and encourage you to assign your qualified minority, female, veteran, and disabled clients to meet our staffing needs.

Dixon Independent Voice 12-5-2025

COMICS & PUZZLES

The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



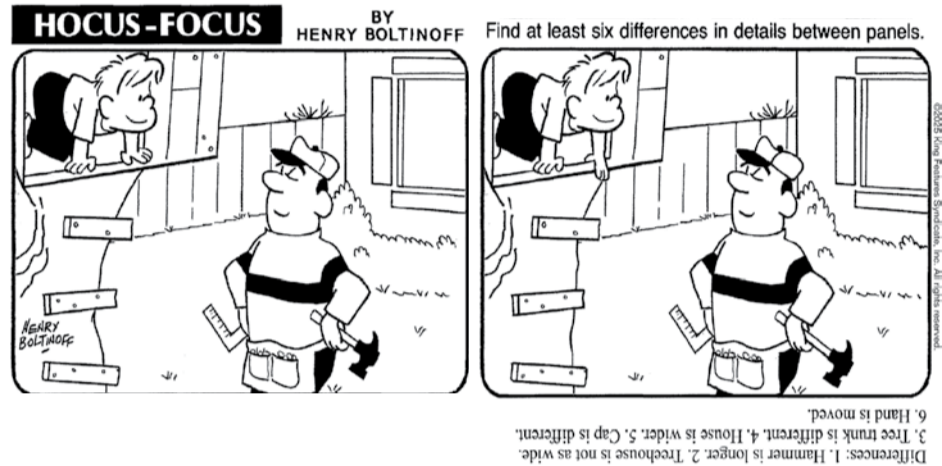
Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps



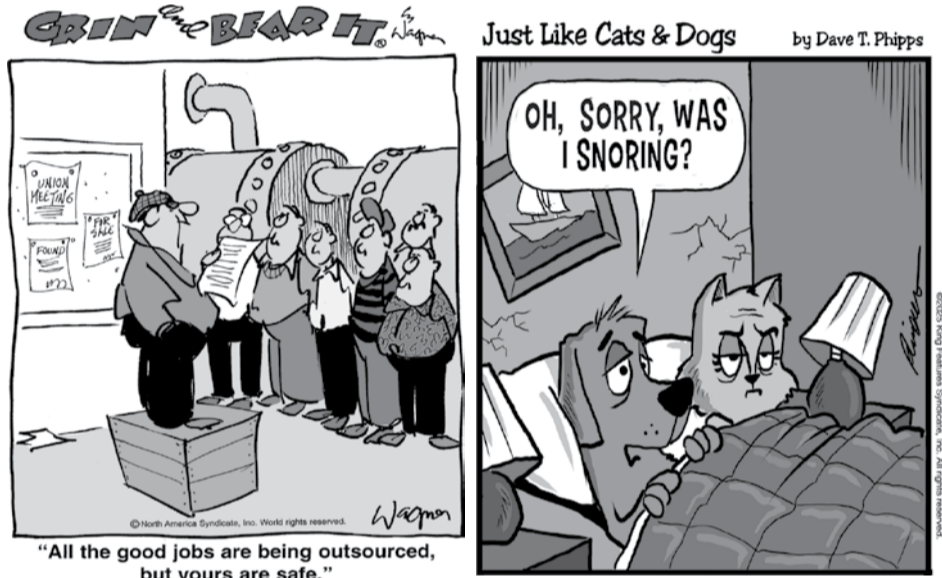
Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas



TIGER

by Bud Blake



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STATEPOINT CROSSWORD • DISNEY CHARACTERS

CLUES

ACROSS

- Imperfections
- Part of T.G.I.F.
- Stark daughter on "Game of Thrones"
- Kind of print, for short
- Hula dancer's flowers
- Kitchen tear-jerker
- Viva voce
- Draft beer container
- Confused
- Irreverent Disney nanny
- "Scar's older brother"
- Famous T-Rex
- Gardening tool
- Louisville Slugger
- Stallion's mate
- Famous ciphering machine
- D'Artagnan's weapon of choice
- Essence
- Gloomy and drab
- Containing limestone
- Scrawny one
- Purse to match a gown
- Spot for boutonniere
- John Oates' partner Daryl
- Prepare for a rainy day
- Catch in a snare
- Rapper LL ___ J
- ___ Aviv
- Wholly engrossed
- Call to Bo Peep
- Shere Khan's sworn enemy
- Marie's and Toulouse's younger brother
- Beneficiary
- Opposite of nothing
- Pancho's last name
- Weasel's aquatic cousin
- "New" prefix
- "Like Iago in "Aladdin" or Laddy Kluck in "Robin Hood"
- Karate blow
- Not safe in baseball
- Like salad greens

DOWN

- Part of an envelope
- Nani Pelekai's little sister and new pet owner
- At the summit of
- Beats, slangily
- Hypertension sufferer's dietary concern
- Sorts
- Driver's aid
- Fraternity letter
- Dwarf buffalo
- Oil field structures
- Moving meditation practice
- "___ day now"
- Hurt or upset
- Some tides
- Israel Kamakawiwo'ole's strings
- Take back
- Beast's love interest
- Bee-related
- Act like a siren
- Macaulay Culkin's "Richie ___"
- Wraths
- Gain access to (2 words)
- Shade of violet
- *a.k.a Little Mermaid

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Community Calendar

Ongoing Activities:

Alcoholics Anonymous – If you want to drink, that's your business. If you want to stop drinking, we can help. Call Alcoholics Anonymous at 800-970-9040 for either local meeting information or to speak to someone.

American Legion Dinners – Every Friday night at the Veterans Memorial Hall, 1305 N. First St. Prices range from \$12 to \$17 depending on menu. Live music every Friday. Live band first and third Fridays.

Bingo – Is played every Monday and Wednesday at the Senior/Multi-Use Center, 201 S. 5th St., beginning at 12 p.m. Call 707-678-7022 for more information.

Friendship Services of Solano County – Do you spend a lot of time alone? Would you like a telephone companion? Call Friendship Service at 707-644-9062 x242 or 707-644-8909 and ask Cyndi about becoming a client. It's free. A program of Catholic Social Services. A provider of the Napa-Solano Area Agency on Aging. Email: friendship@csssolano.org.

Meals on Wheels – Homebound seniors can receive meals delivered to their homes by calling 707-425-0638. Lunch also served at the Dixon Senior Center, 201 South 5th St. at 11:30 a.m. M-F. Reservations required – call 707-425-0638 one day in advance.

Regular Meetings:

Al-Anon – Family and friends of alcoholics can get support through Al-Anon, which meets Mondays, 7 to 8 p.m. at the United Methodist Church, 209 N. Jefferson St.

American Legion – Dixon Post 208 meets at 7 p.m. on the first Wednesday of each month at the Veterans Memorial Hall, 1305 N. First St.. For information, call 707-678-6308. Also visit us online at www.dixonveterans.org/Legion.

American Legion Auxiliary – Dixon Post 208 meets at 6 p.m. on the first Wednesday of each month at the Veterans Memorial Hall, 1305 N. First St.. For information, contact Pat Holland (President) at 707-678-3685 or Leah Marlin (Vice President) at 530-304-5385. Visit us online at www.dixonveterans.org/Legion.

Anderson PTO – Meets monthly at 7 p.m. at Anderson Elementary School, 415 East C St. Email andersonroadrunnerspto@gmail.com for dates.

Bids For Kids – Is a volunteer organization created to promote and foster youth participation in agriculture. Anyone interested in this endeavor is welcome and encouraged to attend our monthly meeting. Meetings are held every third Thursday of the month. For more information, please contact secretary, Lisa Dage at 707-246-5623, fivedages@sbcbglobal.net or president, James Fuller at 916-952-0167, jameskfuller@yahoo.com.

Boy Scout Troop 152 – Meets Tuesdays, 7 to 8:30 p.m., in the Social Hall at United Methodist Church, 209 North Jefferson. Scouts is for boys 11 to 18 years old. Contact Matt at 707-685-1750 or email scoutmaster@troop152dixon.com for more information. Check us out on the web @ troop152dixon.com.

Chief Solano Kennel Club, Inc. meetings – at 7:30 p.m. on the first Thursday at the Elmira Fire Station. Call Linda at phone below to RSVP. Open to everyone. No July meeting. For info call 446-7492 or visit www.chiefsolanokennelclub.org.

Chief Solano Kennel Club, Inc. classes – Puppy Socialization 6:20 to 6:50 p.m. (4 to 12 mos), Beginning Obedience 7 to 7:40 p.m. (4 mos & older) indoor training classes on Wednesdays at the Elmira Fire Station, as well as

Conformation classes at 7:50 to 8:30 p.m. for those who show dogs or are interested in showing their dogs. Classes are open to everyone and their canine companions. Classes are not appropriate for aggression issues. Discounts for Seniors 55 and over, Juniors under 16, and those who have adopted a dog from the Humane Society, a breed rescue group, or your local shelter. Bring adoption certificate when you register. Visit www.chiefsolanokennelclub.org.

CITY OF DIXON: The following meetings are held in the Council Chamber at 600 East A St. The agendas are available before meetings at www.ci.dixon.ca.us. For further information, call 707-678-7000 and ask for the City Clerk's office, Planning Dept., Parks & Recreation Dept., or Transportation Dept.

City Council – Meets on the first and third Tuesdays of every month at 7 p.m.

Planning Commission – Meets the second Tuesday of every month at 7 p.m.

Parks & Recreation Commission – Meets the fourth Tuesday of every month at 7 p.m.

Transportation Advisory Commission – Meets the third Wednesday of every EVEN month at 7 p.m.

Dixon Adult Literacy Program – Solano County Library Adult Literacy Services is seeking volunteers to help an adult with their reading, writing, or English-speaking skills at the Dixon Public Library. No experience necessary, flexible hours. All training and materials are provided. Contact: Literacy@solanocounty.com or 707-784-1526.

Dixon Boat Club – Meets first Thursday of the month. For more information, call Butch at 707-678-3622.

Dixon Downtown Business Association

– Dedicated to enhancing the business environment and promoting the revitalization of downtown Dixon as the cultural center of the community. Merchant meetings are held on the first Thursday of the month at various locations. Log onto www.downtowndixonca.com, email DDROAC@yahoo.com, or call 707-678-8400 for more information.

Dixon Game & Conservation Club – Meetings on second Monday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at the Game Club Building on East Mayes. For more information, contact John Kett at 916-284-4683.

Dixon Historical Society – Meets quarterly on the third Sunday of Feb., Apr., Aug., and Oct. from 2 to 4 p.m. at the Dixon United Methodist Church Social Hall located at 209 N. Jefferson St. in Dixon. Meetings include a historical representation and announcements of upcoming events. Anyone interested in the history of Dixon, and its surrounding areas, is welcome! You do not need to be a member to attend, and all presentations are free to the community. The Dixon History Museum is open for visits, Thursdays 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., Fridays 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. and Saturdays 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. For further information, please contact us at www.dixonhistoricalsociety.org. Email dhs.dixonhistoricalsociety@gmail.com, or call 707-693-3044.

Dixon Kiwanis Club – an International civic organization serving the community through enhancing children's lives meets on the fourth Monday of each month at the Dixon Chamber of Commerce Conference Room. Call Kristin Janisch at 918-840-0785 for more information.

Dixon Lions Club – Since 1954, the Dixon Lions Club is a group of local people who identify needs within our Dixon community and work together to fulfill those needs. Internationally our 45,867 clubs & more than 1,347,322 members make us the world's largest service club organization. We meet first/third Wednesdays at Bud's Pub & Grill from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Website: <http://e-clubhouse.org/sites/dixonca>. Facebook page: Dixon Lions Club.

Dixon Rotary Club – Meets on most Wednesdays at noon at The Creative Space, 160 West A. St., Dixon. Rotary is the world's first and oldest service club organization with over 1.4 million members working locally and internationally to improve health and sanitation, combat hunger, provide education, and promote peace. For more information and meeting confirmation, contact Rotary President Marlene Vega at 707-678-9368.

Dixon Scottish Cultural Association – Open to anyone who is interested in celebrating Scottish culture. Meetings are on the third Wednesday of each month at 7 p.m. at the American Legion Hall, 1305 N. First St. For details, visit <https://scotsindixon.us/>.

Dixon Senior Club – Meets the second Tuesday of each month from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the

Dixon Senior Multi-Use Center, 201 S. Fifth St. For more info, call 678-7022.

Dixon Toastmasters/Public Speaking Club – Need to speak in front of people? Want to improve your communication skills? Want to have fun learning? Check us out! We meet Mondays at 7 p.m. at the Living Hope Church. For more info, call or text Lynda Mendez at 530-665-0948 or Rose Cooke at 707-297-0918.

Dixon Women's Improvement Club – From September through May of each year, the Dixon Women's Improvement Club dedicated to the betterment of Dixon, meets on the third Wednesday of the month for stimulating presentations, activities, and friendships. Meetings are held at the Dixon United Methodist Church Fellowship Hall.

Dixon Youth Soccer Board Meetings – The board will meet the third Tuesday of each month, except for December, at the Sutter West Medical Center Conference Room, at 7 p.m.

Domestic Violence Support Group – Thursdays from 10 to 11 a.m. at SafeQuest Solano, 1234 Empire St., Fairfield. Info 707-422-7345.

Dry Dock – This Alcoholics Anonymous group meets Mondays, 7 to 8:30 p.m. and Saturdays, 10 to 11 a.m. at Dixon United Methodist Church, corner of B and N. Jefferson St.

Fairfield/Suisun Bass Reapers – Meets first Tuesday of each month at RoundTable Pizza, 5085 Business Center Drive, Fairfield. For more info, call 707-429-3239.

Friends of the Dixon Public Library – Meets at the library on the second Tuesday of the month at 5 p.m. For more information, call 707-624-0144.

Gretchen Higgins Parent Teacher Organization – We meet the second Monday of each month in the library at our school. Email ohpto1525@gmail.com for more information.

Independent Order of Oddfellows Montezuma Lodge #172 – Meets at 6 p.m. on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month at 111 West A. St., Dixon above Bud's. For more info, call Jason 530-400-0281 or Ed 916-837-6865.

Lambtown Committee – Meets third Monday each month at 6 p.m. at Veteran's Hall. Email John Knight at johnknightpto@gmail.com

Living With Cancer – Support Group for people who have or have had cancer meets the first, third, and fifth Tuesday of every month, 7 to 8:30 p.m., in the Dining conference room at Woodland Memorial Hospital, 1325 Cottonwood St., Woodland. Free.

Narcotics Anonymous – Open meetings are held every Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday from 7:30 to 8:30 p.m. at Dixon United Methodist, 209 N. Jefferson St. (Corner of West B and N. Jefferson). For helpline information and other meetings, go to www.napasolanona.org.

Northern Solano Democratic Club (NSDC) – Meets on the second Monday of the

month at 7 p.m. at IBEW, 30 Orange Tree Circle, Vacaville (behind Home Depot). For more information, contact Jeanie White 615-260-7896 or email pres.ndsc@gmail.com. Visit our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/northernolanodems/.

NSDC Democrats in Action – Monthly lunch meeting is every fourth Thursday at noon at Fuso Italian Restaurant at 535 Main St., Vacaville. Meet to discuss actions that can be taken towards local, state, and national political issues. See above for contacts.

Promises AA Group – Meets Fridays at 7:30 p.m. at the United Methodist Church, 209 N. Jefferson St.

Sexual Assault Support Group – Tuesdays from 6 to 7 p.m. at SafeQuest Solano, 1234 Empire St., Fairfield. Info 707-422-7345.

Solano County Mental Health Education – Monthly presentations on various topics will be held on the fourth Thursday of each month from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at 2101 Courage Dr., Fairfield. Call Rachel Ford at 707-784-8362 for more information and monthly topic.

Sons of the American Legion – Meet every second Wednesday of the month at 7 p.m. at the Dixon American Legion Post 208 Hall. For information, call Wayne Holland at 707-301-0941.

Soroptimist International of Dixon – Meets Thursdays at noon at the Dixon United Methodist Church (20 N. Jefferson). Call President Barbara Rigdon at 408-306-7390. Mail: P.O. Box 472, Dixon, CA 95620.

36th District Agricultural Assn. – Board of Directors meet the second Wednesday of each month, 6 p.m. in the board room located at 655 S. First St. (Dixon May Fair)

Tremont Teachers and Parents Association – Meets the second Tuesday of every month at 6:30 p.m. in the Tremont School. For more information contact 678-9533.

Toastmasters – Meets every other Monday from 7 to 8 p.m. Contact Lynda Mendez at 530-665-0948 or email her at mendezlynda55@yahoo.com

Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) – Dixon Post 8151 meets at 7 p.m. on the third Wednesday of each month at the Olde Vets Hall, 231 N. First St. For information, contact Cecil Dennings (Commander) at 209-395-8019. Also visit us online at m.facebook.com/DixonVFW.

Young Ladies Institute of Dixon – Meets the third Thursday of the month at St. Peter's Parish Hall, 105 S. 2nd St. All Catholic women are invited to attend. For more information, call Virginia Fletcher at 678-5145. ★

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Early and Late Navel Orange Varieties Spread Out Harvest

California's iconic navel orange—a signature citrus fruit for the fresh market—arrived in produce aisles right on time this year. Picking started Oct. 9 in Kern County, historically the first region to begin navel orange harvest. “Absence of a late summer heat wave and cooler October weather helped the crop reach maturity at the normal time,” said Matt Watkins of Bee Sweet Citrus, a grower, packer and shipper in Fresno County. As fruit color and maturity develop, harvest will accelerate and move north to other counties. Navel oranges are harvested from fall through spring and may continue into the summer, depending on markets and fruit quality. Early and late varieties help spread out the harvest season, giving growers an opportunity to hit markets when prices are good.

Farm Tech Focuses on Robotic Weeding in Vegetables

Weeding robots have emerged as a key focus of autonomous farm technology as growers seek solutions for costly and labor-intensive tasks. One model, which was displayed at the 2025 FIRA USA agricultural technology conference last month in Woodland, is the SharpShooter system from Hayward-based Verdant Robotics. The SharpShooter is a tractor attachment that uses artificial intelligence to identify weeds and deliver precise, controlled sprays without hurting the

cash crop. “We’re delivering milliliter streams of liquid onto the weed,” said Chad Yagow, Verdant’s director of agronomy and industry relations. “If you think about a hypodermic needle, if you press that plunger, that little stream of liquid that’s coming out—that’s what we’re doing every time that we take a shot.”

State Vet Reflects on Her Work as Animal Health Chief

California State Veterinarian Annette Jones, who is set to retire at the end of the year, reflected in a recent Ag Alert® column on her nearly 20 years as the state’s chief animal health official. Though she has dealt with numerous animal disease outbreaks during her time at the California Department of Food and Agriculture, she said her career’s biggest challenge was the most recent outbreak of highly pathogenic bird flu, which began in 2022 and escalated each year thereafter. “The virus exploded through dairies and poultry flocks last winter despite efforts to reduce impacts, testing the resilience of our farmers and staff like no other outbreak has,” Jones said. “While the disease impacts are distressing, it is rewarding to wrap up my career with a renewed appreciation for how proactive our producers and processors can be.” Looking ahead, she said she hopes “the spirit of cooperation continues as California farmers and ranchers face new threats and that we keep focusing on getting the job done with mutual respect.”★

Kings Korner

By V.G. Harris



Will the real Sacramento Kings please stand up. Yes, Kings fans, it's been a conundrum to say the least, and in spite of a 5 and 16 record to start the season, bright spots have actually surfaced.

Stuck with 3 paltry wins just one week ago, the Sactown boys went into the city of Denver, and handed the first place Nuggets a surprising 128-123 defeat. Perhaps equally surprising was the 117-112 win over the Timberwolves just 2 nights later before a roaring crowd at Golden One Center. Both victories came with big man Domantas Sabonis sidelined with a knee injury, leaving fans and pundits wondering what can these guys do if they play like this at full strength?

Well, that's certainly a good question, but we can all remember what the team looked like 3 seasons ago when Domantas arrived in Sacramento and led the Kings to 48 wins and a playoff berth. That team led the NBA in scoring but also had a vaunted point guard by the name of DeArnon Fox.

I think it's important to take a closer look at these back-to-back wins that the Kings recently put together and try to find a common thread. It's actually very obvious. In both wins the Kings shot remarkably well from the free throw line, something that has been seemingly impossible for this team to do. Against the Nuggets the Kings went 22-23 missing amazingly only one shot the entire night. Two nights later against the Timberwolves the Kings went 26-28 from the line missing only 2 shots.

Now compare that with Sunday night's game against the Grizzlies. 59% from the free throw line in a tight game converting on only 13 of 22 attempts in a 115-107 loss.

Unfortunately, the game against the Grizzlies has been the pattern we've seen all too often when the Kings put together that alarming 8-games losing streak.

So, even with Domantas Sabonis sidelined, the Kings are capable of taking down some of the best teams in the NBA, but making their free throws is absolutely critical!

Unfortunately, the Kings are among the worst shooting NBA teams when it comes to free throws, and as we've seen, if wins are to come that pattern has to change.

Doug Christie can talk all he wants to

about defense and playing for 48 minutes, but if his team can't convert from the line the stats don't lie.

But the Sacramento Kings can only play the players on the court, and this year's pattern of substitutions has been a head scratcher. Last year's first round draft choice Devin Carter has been all but forgotten as he sits game after game on the pines. A solid defender, good rebounder, and efficient scorer around the rim, Devin appears not to be in the Kings future and fans want to know why.

The coaching staff talks about a youth movement while second year player Isaac Jones was recently cut from the team. 6'9" with a huge wingspan, Isaac was scooped up by the first place Detroit Pistons almost immediately, and it won't surprise me to see them utilize Jones moving forward.

The number 1 problem has been identified and it's the inability to shoot free throws with any consistency, but what is #2?

The coaching staff and entire franchise can't evaluate talent! Drafting talent over the years, and talent that resides already on the team.

Allowing Jonas Valanciunas to get away was a huge mistake, and one that has benefited the Denver Nuggets greatly.

No one could see or even imagine a Kings team with Domantas at the #4 and moving Valanciunas to the #5.

Any way you look at it, the Kings shot themselves in the foot when they let Jonas walk away.

Defensive standout Keon Ellis is getting less and less playing time, logging all of 6 minutes in the loss to the Grizzlies, and fans attending home games have taken to collectively calling, "we want Keon, we want Keon!"

This is not a good look, but it begs the question, why? Why do fans have to beg the coach to play a player that could obviously help the team?

Player evaluation, it's as simple as that.

Don't put all the blame for a 5-16 record solely on the players and give the coaching staff a pass.

All the best!
Your thoughts are always welcome at vgharriskingsfan@gmail.com. ★

Ask DR. UNIVERSE

Dr. Universe: Can Humans Live in Space for a Month?

- Maya, 11, Seattle

Dear Maya,
I mostly keep all four paws on the ground. It's hard to imagine living out in space.

I asked my friend Erica Crespi about it. She's a biologist at Washington State University. She studies how animals tolerate stressors faced in the environment—including how humans can live and thrive in space.

Crespi told me that Valeri Vladimirovich Polyakov lived on the Mir Space Station for 437 days and 18 hours in the 1990s. So far, that's the record for living in space.

Polyakov's job was to test the effects of a long space flight—like maybe a trip to Mars. He handled the stress super well. The hardest parts were the first few weeks in space and back on Earth.

But living away from Earth is no easy mission.

"Our species evolved for life on Earth," Crespi said. "The stressors there are different from what we grow up with here."

On Earth, gravity pulls us toward the center of the planet. It's why our feet stay on the ground. It's why our muscles and bones are strong. When we walk or run, we work against the tug of gravity.

There's almost no gravity in space. Astronauts float. That sounds fun, but without gravity, muscles shrink and bones weaken. Astronauts exercise about two hours every day to make up for it.

Low gravity even affects



Here's Russian cosmonaut Polyakov peeking out of the Mir core module in 1995. The module was meeting up with NASA's space shuttle Discovery. Polyakov had been in space for over a year at this point. Courtesy photo

what's going on inside the body. An astronaut's heart works hard to move their blood around like usual. Some astronauts say that causes sinus pressure—kind of like having a cold all the time.

Crespi told me her research group wants to know how space affects the microbes inside astronauts. Those microbes help us digest food, make vitamins and fight off sickness. Low gravity and other stressors in space may make things harder for them, too.

Another problem is radiation. That's energy from the sun and other places inside and outside our solar system. Too much radiation can make us sick or cause serious health problems. Earth's atmosphere protects us from that. Spacecraft must be carefully built to shield astronauts.

Astronauts also don't have

trees or oceans to recycle air and water. They rely on machines to do those jobs, and to deal with space dust and extreme temperature.

Then there are the emotional challenges. Astronauts live in small, enclosed spaces. They can't step outside to feel the breeze. They don't have the familiar sights, sounds or smells of home. They miss their families and friends.

Even the sleep schedule in space is tricky. The space station orbits the Earth quickly. Outside its windows, the sun rises and sets every 45 minutes. Astronauts use lights and curtains to mimic the light-and-dark schedule on Earth.

But Crespi is optimistic that we'll figure out how to keep humans happy and healthy in space. Right now, scientists are developing sensors to monitor astronaut health. They're figuring out how to grow plants in space and recycle water more efficiently.

If we could farm in space, astronauts would have fresh, familiar foods. Those plants could recycle air and water. Plus, it feels good to be around plants.

Once more people—and maybe even cats—can stay in space longer, it would be less lonely for everyone. Maybe it would feel like visiting a little town in a space station.

That would help keep humans grounded while they reach for the stars.

Sincerely,
Dr. Universe

New Studies Gives Lowdown on California's Sky-High Living Costs



By Dan Walters, CALMatters.org

We Californians know, or should know, that while living in this state has many positive aspects, we are paying through the nose for the experience.

A flurry of recent studies drives home how deeply California residents must dig to meet costs of living that are either at or near the highest of any state.

One comes from the Legislative Analyst's Office, the Legislature's advisor on the state budget, delving into the astronomic costs of buying a home.

The LAO study found "California home prices far exceed the rest of the country." Mid-tier homes, those roughly in the middle of the price range, are more than twice as expensive as the typical mid-tier home elsewhere in the U.S. Monthly payments for such homes run about \$5,500 in California, 74% more than what they were 25 years ago.

The study also found that the annual household income needed to qualify for a mortgage on a mid-tier California home in September was about \$221,000 — more than two times the median California household income in 2024, which was \$102,000.

For a bottom-tier home, about \$136,000 in annual income is needed to qualify for a mortgage — about 33%

higher than median household income was in 2024.

The data illustrate why California has the second lowest rate of home ownership in the nation. Just 55.3% of Californians live in homes they or their families own, slightly higher than New York's ownership rate.

It's not surprising that hundreds of thousands of California residents, unable to aspire to home ownership, have decamped for more affordable states, such as Texas, where home prices are a fraction of California's.

Those who do migrate to other states find not only are houses much less expensive but fuel for their cars and utilities to light, heat and cool their homes are markedly less expensive.

The Center for Jobs & the Economy, an offshoot of the California Business Roundtable, continuously monitors energy costs in California and other states. Its latest report says gasoline, averaging \$4.64 a gallon in California, is as much as \$1.50 a gallon higher than in Texas and other states. California's electrical power rates are roughly twice as high.

Another take on California living costs comes from the Transparency Foundation, a conservative economic think tank.

It gathered a wide variety of factors and calculated living costs for an upper-middle class California family with a \$130,000 annual income. It concluded the family would pay \$29,753 more per year than the national average for housing, utilities, health care, taxes and other costs of living.

"This report should be a wake-up call to all Californians, that they are

being unfairly punished by the bad policies imposed on them by their politicians — and they are literally paying the price for it," Dave McCulloch, the foundation's chairman, said in a statement about the report.

A new poll by the Public Policy Institute of California confirms that Californians worry about living costs. Nearly a third of those polled said they, or someone in their household, have reduced food purchases to save money.

The California Farm Bureau revealed that a traditional Thanksgiving dinner for 10 people will cost a California family \$72.61, well above the national average of \$55.18.

Finally, there's a new report from WalletHub, a website devoted to personal finance, implying that Californians are taking on more debt to pay their rising bills.

In this year's third quarter — July through September — the average California household added \$880 in new debt, increasing the total owed to \$259,773, second only to residents of Hawaii.

All together, Californians' personal debt increased by \$11.8 billion during the quarter.

Now it's nearly \$3.2 trillion, just a bit lower than their \$3.6 trillion in annual personal income.

A truly staggering number.

Dan Walters is one of the most decorated and widely syndicated columnists in California history, authoring a column four times a week that offers his view and analysis of the state's political, economic, social and demographic trends. ★

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Ph.D. Candidates Discuss Blue Orchard Bee Research

By Kathy Keatley Garvey,
UC Davis Department
of Entomology
and Nematology

YOLO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - Lexie Martin and Abigail Lehner, two doctoral candidates in the University of California, Davis Department of Entomology and Nematology, presented their research at the Orchard Bee Association's recent annual meeting at Woodinville, Washington.

Martin of the lab of community ecologist Rachel Vannette, professor and vice chair of the department, presented her talk on "A Sequence- and Lab-Based Approach to Investigate Chalkbrood Disease Infection across the Western Range of Blue Orchard Bees (*Osmia lignaria*)."

Lehner of the lab of Professor Neal Williams, pollination ecologist, discussed "What Three Years of Longitudinal Monitoring at *Osmia* Nests Have Revealed About Houdini Fly Parasitism." Lehner was also elected the Orchard Bee Association treasurer.

This was their third year of giving presentations to the organization.

In her talk, Martin said that "Pathogen infection is a significant contributor to mortality and decreased fitness in many bees. Though much research has been done to understand diseases in commercially-managed social bee species, much less has been done to understand infection in solitary bees."

"In particular, there has been concern for spillover of diseases from managed bee species to wild bee species, which could lead to further population declines of our native bees," Martin said.

"As a result," Martin continued, "it is critical to understand the variation in pathogen strains that can infect solitary bees and if pathogen strains can jump between bee host-species. In this study, we use a multi-method approach to investigate one, the variation in



A blue orchard bee, *Osmia lignaria*, collects pollen. Photo by Kathy Keatley Garvey



Lexie Martin is a doctoral candidate in the University of California, Davis Department of Entomology and Nematology. Courtesy photo



Abigail Lehner, a doctoral candidate in the University of California, Davis Department of Entomology and Nematology. Courtesy photo

chalkbrood strains present within deceased blue orchard bee larvae across their western range and two, how variable communities of chalkbrood impact infection in

blue orchard bees." It is unknown how chalkbrood strains vary within blue orchard bees and more broadly across bee species, and which strains

are infective in blue orchard bees, according to Martin, and this project will have a significant positive contribution to a broader understanding of bee disease dynamics.

In her talk, Lehner said that "The introduction of non-native species poses major risks in agriculture, with hundreds of new alien species recorded annually. Houdini flies (*Cacoxenus indagator*) were recently introduced to the United States and parasitize cavity-nesting native bees, including the blue orchard bee (*Osmia lignaria*), a managed solitary bee used to pollinate spring orchard trees."

"The introduction of Houdini flies poses an existential threat to the stability of the solitary bee industry, the livelihoods of orchard managers and to native bee population persistence," Lehner said. "We have monitored

parasitism rates at blue orchard bee nest blocks in Washington, Oregon, and California over three years to understand temporal patterns and long-term impacts of Houdini fly parasitism. We found Houdini fly parasitism rates significantly increased over three years in the Pacific Northwest. Overall, this research will inform commercial management and conservation strategies for cavity-nesting bees."

Osmia lignaria, commonly known as the orchard mason bee or blue orchard bee, is among 4,000 native bee species in North America. It is a megachilid bee that nests in reeds and other tube-like natural structures. The bee pollinates almonds and blueberries, and a variety of stone fruits, including apples, pears, cherries, apricots and plums.

Osmia is used commercially in agricultural operations, especially in almonds and early blooming-fruit trees, and occupies handcrafted "bee blocks." Considered efficient pollinators, they are able to forage in cooler temperatures than honeybees. Gardeners often set up "bee condos" or "bee hotels" for them in their landscapes.

The kleptoparasitic fly, *Cacoxenus indagator*, is a species of fruit fly native to central and southern Europe. The adult lays its eggs in the stored pollen of a mason bee's newly constructed nest. The fly larvae feed mainly on stored pollen but can also eat the bee larvae. This fly is commonly known as the Houdini fly for its ability to escape through the cell's mud wall. The small brown fly (wing length 2.5mm) has clear wings and large red eyes.

The Orchard Bee Association was launched in 2011 by a team of independent businesses, orchard managers and researchers to accelerate the production and use of orchard mason bees (specifically, *Osmia lignaria*, *O. cornifrons*, *O. cornuta* and *O. rufa*) in various spring crops and orchards. ★

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