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Volunteers Needed for Wreath Cleanup



Organizers are seeking 20 to 30 people to assist with unloading pickups at the dumpsters. Volunteers assigned to unloading should park near the dumpster area, where project leaders will provide direction. Those interested in the task are asked to call in advance. Photo courtesy of Wreath Project

By Kendall Brown

DIXON, CA (MPG) - Wreath Project is organizing a large-scale cleanup at Sacramento Valley National Cemetery following the placement of wreaths and boughs on every grave as part of its annual remembrance effort.

The volunteer-run project, operated by Curtis and Susie Stocking, has placed wreaths at the cemetery at 5810 Midway Road since 2006. Since its inception, the project has maintained 100 percent coverage of the cemetery, honoring all 38,000 graves each year. Following the COVID-19 pandemic, the



Wreath Project is organizing a large-scale cleanup at Sacramento Valley National Cemetery following the placement of wreaths and boughs on every grave as part of its annual remembrance effort. Cleanup is scheduled for 7:30 a.m. Jan. 10. All ages are welcome. Photo courtesy of Wreath Project

project transitioned from full wreaths to evergreen boughs beginning in 2020. Volunteers completed

this year's placement on Dec. 13, continuing the tradition of full coverage. Organizers estimate that approximately 40,000 boughs will be needed for the 2026 event.

Cleanup is scheduled for 7:30 a.m. Jan. 10. The effort focuses on collecting boughs and wreaths for on-site disposal. Volunteers of all ages are welcome, and no sign-up is required. The event will take place rain or shine and typically lasts about 90 minutes.

Participants are encouraged to bring wagons, wheelbarrows, or poles or dowels to work in pairs to string boughs together for

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Doug LaMalfa, Longtime North State Congressman, Passes



U.S. Rep. Doug LaMalfa, who represented Northern California's 1st Congressional District, including Colusa County, died Tuesday at age 65. Photo courtesy of the Office of Rep. Doug LaMalfa

By Lloyd Green Jr.

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA, CA (MPG) - U.S. Rep. Doug LaMalfa, a long-time Republican lawmaker who represented much of Northern California, has died, House Republican leadership announced Tuesday. He was 65.

LaMalfa, a fourth-generation rice farmer and business owner, built a reputation in Washington as a strong advocate for agriculture and rural communities. He represented California's 1st Congressional District since 2013, covering a wide stretch of the North State from the Oregon border to areas north of Sacramento.

House Majority Whip Tom Emmer confirmed LaMalfa's death in a statement Tuesday Jan. 6.

"Jacquie and I are devastated about the sudden loss of our friend, Congressman Doug LaMalfa," Emmer said. "Doug was a loving father and husband, and a staunch advocate for his constituents and rural America. Our prayers are with Doug's wife, Jill, and their children."

In Colusa County, LaMalfa was remembered as a consistent supporter of local agriculture and business interests. Colusa County Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Jack Cunningham said LaMalfa maintained a close relationship with the chamber and the broader business community.

"Congressman LaMalfa was a trusted friend and steadfast supporter of the Colusa County Chamber of Commerce, our local business community, agriculture, and Northern California," Cunningham said. "His leadership and dedication to rural communities left a lasting impact on Colusa County and the entire region."

The Colusa County Board of Supervisors also issued condolences. Board Chair Daurice Smith said LaMalfa's death was a significant loss to the North State.

"He championed rural problems and was a great supporter of our

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Dixon Community Theater Announces Upcoming Auditions and Showtimes

By Kendall Brown

DIXON, CA (MPG) - Dixon Community Theater has announced details for its upcoming winter production and spring musical auditions, continuing its schedule of live performances and community involvement at the Dixon Performing Arts Center.

The theater's next production is "The House of Frankenstein," a two-act comedy written by Martin Downing and directed by David Cripe. Performances are scheduled for Fridays and Saturdays at 7 p.m. Feb. 20, 21, 27 and 28, with Sunday matinees at 2 p.m. Feb. 22 and March 1. The show will be staged at the Dixon Performing Arts Center, 555 College Way. Tickets go on sale Feb. 1 and will be available online.

Auditions are also approaching for the theater's spring musical, Rodgers and



Dixon Community Theater has announced details for its upcoming winter production and spring musical auditions, continuing its schedule of live performances and community involvement at the Dixon Performing Arts Center. Photo by Nicolas Brown

Hammerstein's "Cinderella" (Broadway version). Auditions will be held at the Dixon Performing Arts Center and are open to community members ages 14 and older. Community auditions are scheduled from 5 to 9:30 p.m. Feb. 8 and 6 to 9:30 p.m. Feb. 9. Dixon student auditions will take

place from noon to 6 p.m. Feb. 9. Callbacks are by invitation only and are scheduled from 6 to 9:30 p.m. Feb. 10.

Video audition submissions will be accepted until 6 p.m. Feb. 9 for those unable to attend in person. Walk-in auditions are welcome, though advance signups are encouraged.

Audition materials, including forms, character sides, sheet music and background tracks, will be provided on site.

Rehearsals for "Cinderella" are scheduled from March 2 through April 16, with technical rehearsals set for April 19 to 23. Performances

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Dixon News Briefs

Volunteers Needed for Wreath Project Cleanup

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easier pickup. Collected greenery will be moved to the curb, where volunteers with pickup trucks and trailers will haul the materials to on-site dumpsters. Drivers assisting with hauling will be loaded and unloaded by other volunteers.

Organizers are seeking 20 to 30 people to help unload pickups at the dumpsters. Groups interested in taking on that task are asked to call 707-249-5852 in advance. Volunteers assigned to unloading should park near the dumpster area, where project

leaders will provide direction.

Those wishing to keep a wreath or bough are asked to remove it before Saturday's cleanup.

The organization has already announced its 2026 dates for bough placement. Teens and adults are encouraged to arrive by 3 p.m. Dec. 18 for bough truck unloading and 7:30 a.m. Dec. 19 for bough placement.

For more information, visit wreath-project.org or email wreathproject@yahoo.com. ★

Dixon Community Theater Announces Upcoming Auditions and Showtimes

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will take place over two weekends, April 24 to 26 and May 1 to 3, at the Dixon Performing Arts Center.

Additional audition and production details, including schedules and submission guidelines, are available by contacting the production team at lydiasmith0925@gmail.com.

Dixon Community Theater is a 501(c)

(3) nonprofit, volunteer-run organization.

In addition to its production schedule, the organization is seeking passionate and dedicated individuals interested in serving on its board of directors for the 2026–27 term.

Information about board service and other opportunities is available at dixoncommunitytheater.org or by email at info@dixoncommunitytheater.org. ★

Homeowners Could Qualify for Grants for New Roofs and Fire Safety



The Safe Homes grant program is designed to help low- and middle-income homeowners with fire mitigation. People who qualify could use grants to create 5-foot ember-resistant zones around properties. Photo by Marko Tomic from Pixabay

By Levi Sumagaysay, CAIMatters.org

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - Some homeowners in areas of California with high wildfire risk could eventually get money for new roofs or to build fire-resistant zones around their properties under a new state law that went into effect Jan. 1.

The Safe Homes grant program is designed to help low- and middle-income homeowners with fire mitigation. People who qualify could use grants to create 5-foot ember-resistant zones around properties, also known as Zone Zero, as required by law in some areas. The program will also contribute toward costs for fire-safe roofs.

The state's Insurance Department, which is responsible for implementing the program, is working out the details around eligibility, the amount of and the distribution of grants. It is now developing an application portal that it hopes to have ready by March, said Michael Soller, spokesperson for the department.

The insurance department will be handling all the details of the grants, said Mike Dayton, chief of staff of Assemblymember Lisa Calderon, the Los Angeles-area Democrat and chair of the Assembly Insurance Committee who wrote the law, and has so far secured \$3 million in the state budget to get the program started.

Soller said homeowners who have policies with admitted insurance carriers or the last-resort FAIR Plan and who live in high-risk areas will have to meet income limits set by the state housing department to be eligible for the grants, whose amounts have not been determined. Communities, cities and counties with mitigation projects could also apply for grants.

He also said the insurance department plans to advocate for additional and ongoing funding for the program.

Another source of funding could be the federal government, including the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Soller said. But Gov. Gavin Newsom recently tried to meet with FEMA to talk about disaster aid related to the Los Angeles County fires and was unsuccessful.

Also, two Californians in Congress have proposed legislation that would establish a federal grant program and tax credits for mitigation. U.S. Reps. Mike Thompson, a Napa Democrat, and Doug LaMalfa, an Oroville Republican, have introduced their bill for the past two sessions, but it has not made it to a floor vote.

The California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection recently extended the finalization of rules regarding Zone Zero buffers around properties to the first half of next year. The rules are expected to take effect for existing homes in 2029. ★



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It's All About the Scrapbook is hosting a card-making class from 10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Jan. 31. Held at the shop, 1670 N. Lincoln St., the class will involve creating 6 cards, 2 of which will be interactive, and a bonus card using a Lawn Fawn stamp that participants can keep. Photo by Kendall Brown

By MPG Staff

Friendly Bookworm Christmas Sale

The Friendly Bookworm is hosting a Christmas sale until Jan. 3. Located at 230 N. First St., next to the library, the bookstore is offering 50% off all Christmas merchandise, including books, jigsaw puzzles, movies, greeting cards, toys and music CDs. Notably, the shop will be closed Dec. 24 to Dec. 26 and Dec. 31 to Jan. 31.

For more information, visit the Friends of the Dixon Library Facebook page or call 707-624-0144.

Cat Show at the May Fair

The Cat Fanciers' Association Northwest Region Cat Show, titled "Cats Royale," will take place from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Jan. 10. Held in Madden Hall, 655 S. First St., exhibitor hours are from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. with public visiting hours from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission is \$15 for adults, \$10 for children, students with identification and seniors, and \$40 for families. The show will feature a variety of cat breeds and include a costume contest.

For more information, visit dixonmayfair.com or call 707-678-5529.

Annual Hobo Beef Stew Dinner

American Legion Post 208 is hosting its annual Hobo Beef Stew dinner and raffle at 4:30 p.m. Jan. 16. Held at Veterans Memorial Hall, 1305 N. First St., the event offers a no-host bar at 4:30 p.m. with dinner being served at 6 p.m. Tickets cost \$15 per person.

For more information, visit the Dixon Calendar and Events Facebook page or call 530-304-5385.

Read to a Dog

Dixon Library is hosting Read to a Dog from 3 to 4 p.m. Jan. 5. Hosted at the library, 230 N. First St., the activity provides children ages five to 12 with the opportunity to read aloud to certified therapy dogs. The program offers a relaxed, non-judgmental environment aimed at improving reading fluency and building positive reading experiences. This will be the first event the library hosts after its winter program break.

For more information, visit solanolibrary.com or call 1-866-572-7587.

Dixon Moose Lodge Cornhole

Dixon Moose Lodge hosts cornhole every Monday at 6 p.m. Hosted by 4bagzin, a cornhole apparel shop, the weekly event features drinks, snacks, music, and competitive cornhole. Held at the Moose Lodge, 180 W. B St., participants can sign in using the Scoreholio app for \$10 per person. Newcomers can expect tutorials on cornhole from on-site personnel. Members and qualified guests are invited to play and support the lodge.

For more information, visit the Dixon Calendar and Events Facebook page or call 707-678-9407. ★

Dixon Chamber Connections Networking

The Dixon Chamber of Commerce is hosting a networking event from noon to 1:30 p.m. Jan. 1. This free in-person event, held at The Farmstead at Dixon, 350 Gateway Drive, allows local professionals to connect. Offering a diverse range of potential connections, attendees are encouraged to bring business cards.

For more information, visit dixonchamber.org or call 707-678-2650.

Christmas Tree Recycling Fundraiser

Scout Troop 152 is hosting a tree recycling fundraiser Jan. 3 and 10. Dixonites can sign up online to have their Christmas trees recycled by local Scouts after the New Year for a donation. No donation is too small, but a suggested donation of \$20 per tree is appreciated. Proceeds will fund campouts, service projects, equipment, leadership training and year-round adventure for the troop.

For more information or to sign up, visit troop152dixon.com or call 707-676-6152.

Easy as Pizza

Soroptimist International of Dixon is partnering with Pizza Guys for a fundraiser all day Jan. 12. Held at Pizza Guys, 1455 Ary Lane, attendees are encouraged to mention Soroptimist when they order to participate. A portion of sales will be donated to the club for community grants.

For more information, visit the Dixon Calendar and Events Facebook page or call 707-693-6666.

Dixon Girls Softball Registration

Dixon Girls Softball has opened registration for the Spring 2026 season. Regular registration lasts until Dec. 31, with late registration lasting from Jan. 1 to Jan. 15. Regular registration costs \$225 and late registration costs \$250. 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.

Dixon Library Book Club

Dixon Library is hosting its monthly morning book club meeting from 11 a.m. to noon Jan. 8. The morning book club is a monthly, adult-oriented group that will be reading "They Called Us Enemy" by George Takei. 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 solanolibrary.com or call 1-866-572-7587.

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Youth Wrestling Brings Opportunities to Local Athletes

By Kendall Brown

DIXON, CA (MPG) - Dixon Youth Wrestling is a new athletic program designed to introduce local children to the sport of wrestling, providing structured training and competition opportunities that previously required families to travel outside the city.

The program was founded in late November 2025 by Hayden Fry, a Dixon resident who serves as program director and head coach. Fry also coaches the Mitey Mites football team for Dixon Youth Football and Cheer. He said interest from his football players helped spark the idea.

"Some of my Mitey Mite kids wanted to wrestle, so I started a wrestling program," said Fry.

According to Fry, he grew up in Dixon as a football player and wrestler but, due to the lack of a local youth wrestling program, he frequently had to travel. He wrestled through middle school in Vacaville, continued in high school and later in college. When his own children expressed interest in wrestling, Fry recognized a similar need still existed in the community.

"I thought there was a huge need for our town to have its own program," said Fry. "We have a lot of great athletes and wrestling is the perfect sport for small towns."

Dixon Youth Wrestling is registered under USA Wrestling, the national governing body for the sport, and began holding practices shortly after its formation. According to Fry, local businesses provided early support to help launch the program.

The program serves children from kindergarten through eighth grade, with a primary focus on elementary school students. The youngest participants are 5 years old, and most current wrestlers range from kindergarten to third grade. Fry said all experience levels are welcome, with an emphasis on beginners due to the absence of a previous local program.

Practices are held for about 90 minutes and include instruction on fundamentals, movement and



Practices are held for about 90 minutes and include instruction on fundamentals, movement and positioning, followed by drills and live wrestling. About 30% of practice time is dedicated to live sparring. Photo courtesy of Dixon Youth Wrestling



Dixon Youth Wrestling is a new athletic program designed to introduce local children to the sport of wrestling, providing structured training and competition opportunities that previously required families to travel outside the city. The program was started in late November by Coach Hayden Fry. Photo courtesy of Dixon Youth Wrestling



The program serves children from kindergarten through eighth grade, with a primary focus on elementary school students. The youngest participants are 5 years old, and most current wrestlers range from kindergarten to third grade. All experience levels are welcome. Photo courtesy of Dixon Youth Wrestling

positioning, followed by drills and live wrestling. Fry said athletes typically learn four to five new techniques per practice. About 30 percent of practice time is dedicated to live sparring, and sessions conclude with a fun team-building activity.

The wrestling season operates largely year-round, though the core season runs from late November through mid-March. Fry said the program plans to participate in folkstyle wrestling, as well as Olympic styles

such as freestyle and Greco-Roman. Youth wrestlers have the opportunity to compete in a California state championship in March.

Fry believes the program's mission extends beyond competition.

"It's just learning how to get through difficult times," said Fry. "Wrestling's a complete grind, and once you've made it through it, you can do anything."

He added that wrestling's individual nature teaches accountability,

humility and resilience. Unlike team sports, wrestlers must rely on themselves when facing challenges.

The program has already begun attending tournaments. Fry said that after just two weeks of practice, Dixon Youth Wrestling athletes competed against experienced opponents and earned match wins.

"They're improving a lot every single day," said Fry.

According to Fry, parents and volunteers play a key role in sustaining

the program, particularly by encouraging children to remain committed through the physical and mental challenges of the sport. As the program grows, Fry said additional help will be needed for tasks such as tournament scheduling and administration.

Several local businesses have contributed to Dixon Youth Wrestling, including Platinum Rentals, Primo's Barbershop, KUIU and Pizza Guys.

Looking ahead to 2026, Fry said his goal is to establish Dixon Youth Wrestling as a long-term fixture in the community.

"I want to create something that will be well known and a staple in town," said Fry.

Fry emphasized that participation does not require competition, noting that about half of the current athletes choose to compete. The program's next local tournament appearance is scheduled for the Valentine's Day Massacre in Vacaville during Valentine's Day weekend.

"Competition is their time to shine," Fry said. "It's not about the Dixon Youth Wrestling program; it's about the wrestlers."

For more information, visit Dixon Youth Wrestling on Facebook or call 707-761-9282. ★

Doug LaMalfa, Longtime North State Congressman, Passes

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communities and agriculture," Smith said.

LaMalfa served as chairman of the Congressional Western Caucus and sat on the House committees on Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Transportation and Infrastructure. He was influential in congressional responses to major wildfires that affected Northern California in recent years.

President Donald Trump offered praise during remarks to the House Republican Conference on Tuesday, calling LaMalfa "a fierce champion on California water issues" and a leader who fought for rural communities and families.

California Gov. Gavin Newsom also issued a statement, ordering flags at the State Capitol flown at half-staff in LaMalfa's honor.

"Congressman Doug LaMalfa was a devoted public servant who deeply loved his country, his state, and the communities he represented," Newsom said. "While we often

approached issues from different perspectives, he fought every day for the people of California with conviction and care."

LaMalfa had planned to seek reelection in 2026 despite major changes to his district boundaries under a ballot measure approved by voters in November. The redistricting effort, backed by Democrats, was expected to make his reelection more difficult, making his future one of the most closely watched races in the state.

Newsom is required to call a special election to fill LaMalfa's seat. His office said the election could be held as late as June, when California conducts its 2026 primary.

Colusa County Board of Supervisors Chair Daurice Smith also issued condolences on behalf of the board, extending its thoughts and prayers to LaMalfa's family and those impacted by his passing.

LaMalfa is survived by his wife, Jill, four children, and one grandchild. ★

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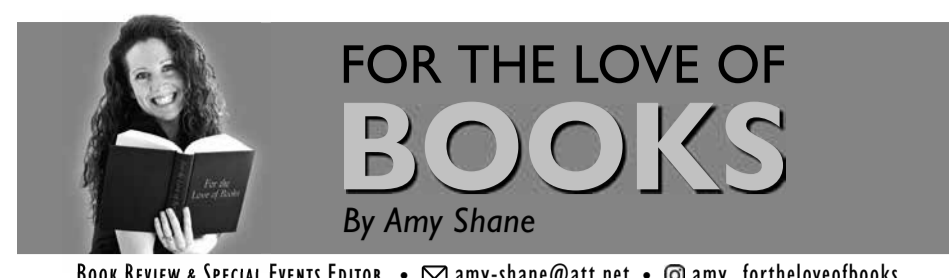
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The Roommate Arrangement

by Samantha Markum

Blair thought she had her whole college life planned out. She was accepted to the same university as her two best friends, and even better, they would all be living in the same house. Then everything fell apart. Her two best friends dropped her out of the house agreement, leaving her scrambling for a place to live and new friends, all while starting the hardest advanced program the college has available.

With only a week to find housing, Blair is desperate, and

desperate to keep it a secret from her parents. With her mom and step-father's goal on her future career in coding, her dream sculpting class comes with strings attached. Then Blair reads a roommate wanted ad, and she is quick to jump. Even though the roommates were a little quirky, the house was old and worn out, and there was only one bathroom for the 6 of them, she jumped at the chance. Blaire knew that if she moved to the dorm, then she would lose the funding for her sculpting class, the only class she truly cared about.

However, the one thing Blaire never expected was that the late-arriving roommate would be her brother's best friend, Jamie. The guy she has grown up with her whole life, and just can't stand. Now, keeping her living arrangement secret



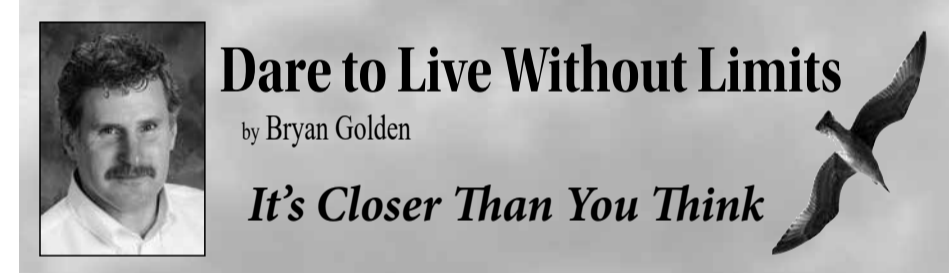
◆ Publisher: McElderry Books
◆ Intended Audience: Young Adult/New Adult

from her parents and her brother is going to be even harder. If only she could get Jamie to agree.

And hence the roommate arrangement is brokered- Blair will help Jamie with an app he is building in exchange for his silence. What Blair never expected was for Jamie not to be so horrible. Soon, Blair and Jamie were spending more time together than she could have ever expected, and for the first time, she started

noticing Jamie for the good-looking guy he truly was. Now Blair is stuck in a whole new predicament. A secret living situation, scary new feelings, and a class she hates. How will Blair ever get out of the mess she has created, and what happens if her parents find out?

In this new romantic comedy set for the new college student, *The Roommate Arrangement* is everything readers are looking for in an enemy-to-lovers trope. Angst, slow-burning romance, and a whole slew of problems, this story is the perfect school break escape. A swoon-worthy read for any reader, this storyline will quickly sweep readers into a lighthearted, charming read, with so many little incidents you can help but root for Blair and Jamie and their roommate arrangement. ★



During the gold rush of the 1800's one fellow, Roger, headed West, bought a claim, and started digging for gold. After a few weeks of excavating, Roger hit pay dirt. The vein he struck was fairly substantial, yielding a consistent amount of the precious metal. Roger didn't get rich but he certainly made quite a good living from his mine.

Roger's good luck lasted for about a year. Then the gold he tapped into seemed to run out. Undeterred, Roger kept digging. After a month of no success, he sold the mine and all of the equipment for pennies on the dollar. Roger wasn't really that upset. He had been able save up a sizeable sum which he was going to use to start a business back east.

William had also gone west hoping to strike it rich. Having very little money, William was happy to buy Roger's mine for next to nothing. William didn't care that the mine was no longer producing gold. He saw it as an opportunity. William had more time than financing so he figured he could devote his time to further exploration.

Since he knew nothing about mining, William hired a geologist to examine the claim and advise him as to where he should dig next. The geologist calculated that the gold vein Roger originally discovered had turned inward about half a foot. All William had to do was dig a few inches in a different direction. William followed the recommendation and struck a major find that made him very wealthy.

Roger called it quits when he was literally inches from more gold than he could have imagined. He was closer to success than he realized. Every day, people all over the world give up on something they conclude is unobtainable. Usually, they are literally a mere grasp from their goals when they throw in the towel.

The problem is that until your reach

your destination, you often don't know how far you have to go. Like Roger, you are usually closer than you think. What a shame to abort your quest when you may be almost there.

You will only fail when you give up. Since you don't know how near at hand success is, it doesn't make any sense to quit. Had Roger understood this principle, he would have struck it rich. I'm sure if Roger ever discovered how close he was, it would have haunted him for the rest of his life.

As a society, we have grown impatient. We expect immediate results. We can communicate instantaneously with virtually anyone on the planet. It's possible to travel anywhere in a matter of hours. We can see the pictures we take instantaneously. A person can win the lottery and become wealthy overnight. There are examples of people being plucked from obscurity to obtain instant celebrity status.

So it's very possible you expect to reach your goals rapidly. If you are impetuous, you will abandon your quest prematurely. It really doesn't matter how long it takes, the time goes by anyway. Just imagine how you would feel knowing you gave up when you were so close. You don't want to be in a position to always wonder how things would be if you had just kept going a little further.

Continually keep in mind that you are closer than you think to attaining your dreams. Don't repeat Roger's mistake and quit when you are just around the corner from success. Since you never know how close you are, you have no option but to keep going.

NOW AVAILABLE: "Dare to Live Without Limits," the book. Visit www.BryanGolden.com or your bookstore. Bryan is a management consultant, motivational speaker, author, and adjunct professor. E-mail Bryan at bryan@columnist.com or write him c/o this paper. ©2025 Bryan Golden ★



Riley Reviews

"WAKE UP DEAD MAN" A TWISTED MURDER MYSTERY WITH MANY TURNS

A Film and TV Review
by Tim Riley

"WAKE UP DEAD MAN" ON NETFLIX

The prolific British murder-mystery writer Agatha Christie's Belgian detective Hercule Poirot, the central character of apparently half of her innumerable novels, is one of the most iconic figures, on par with the brilliant eccentric Sherlock Holmes and hardboiled detective Philip Marlowe.

The 2019 film "Knives Out," written and directed by Rian Johnson, created Benoit Blanc as an oddball private detective with a Southern drawl and a sharp mind who resembles a modern-day Hercule Poirot figure.

Poirot and Blanc have in common the ability to unravel intricate family secrets and crimes. For the third film in the "Knives Out" franchise, Daniel Craig's Benoit Blanc will be summoned to upstate New York to solve the murder of a clergyman.

"Wake Up Dead Man: A Knives Out Mystery" sets the whodunit in a Catholic Church, where Monsignor Jefferson Wicks (Josh Brolin), a firebrand preacher whose demeanor at Our Lady of Perpetual Fortitude holds sway over a diminished number of faithful parishioners.

Meanwhile, change is coming to the small parish in Chimney Rock when young Father Jud Duplenticy (Josh O'Connor), previously a powerful street boxer who killed a man in the ring, is dispatched by Bishop Langstrom (Jeffrey Wright) to work with Monsignor Wicks.

Despite anger issues which caused him to punch a church deacon, Father Jud is given a second chance partly because nobody liked the deacon and the Chimney Rock parish is in decline and in need of a fresh face.

The bishop is no fan of Monsignor Wicks, observing that he's "a few beads shy of a full rosary" and a very unpleasant person whose flock is shrinking. Saying "Christ came to heal the world, not to fight it," the young priest might be the tonic to fix the church.

At the rural church, the Wicks legacy runs deep with buried secrets. The monsignor's grandfather Prentice Wicks promised Jefferson's mother Grace an inheritance if she remained with the church, but then she was left empty-handed upon his death.

Flashbacks reveal that Grace (Annie Hamilton) exacted revenge on the church by overturning statues, destroying religious paintings, and desecrating the crucifix, and then beating up adolescent Martha, who would later become the church secretary in adulthood.

During fiery sermons, the monsignor has a knack for driving away unsuspecting visitors who drop in for a Catholic Mass. What's left of the congregation are mostly sycophants, especially the devoted church lady Martha (Glenn Close) and

groundskeeper Samson Holt (Thomas Haden Church).

Not shying away from a theological debate with Wicks, Father Jud disapproves of the fire and brimstone sermons that resonate only with what few parishioners cling to a blind loyalty to the monsignor.

Upon his initial meeting with Wicks, Father Jud is asked to take his confession, which starts with his sin of envying the wealth and power of others, before veering off into too much detail about sexual self-gratification.

The confession looks like Wicks is playing mind games, and then makes it clear the church belongs to him and that Father Jud is just an upstart sent by Bishop Langstrom, who obviously has his own agenda.

Trying to offer a counterbalance to Wicks' preaching, Father Jud convenes a prayer group of the most loyal congregants with the mission to break down walls between members of the church and Christ, before confessing his own transgressions in his youth.

The coterie of congregants assembled by Father Jud include local doctor Nat Sharp (Jeremy Renner), an alcoholic since his wife left him; Vera Draven (Kerry Washington), an excitable attorney with family secrets; and Simone (Cailee Spaeny), a cellist confined to a wheelchair due to an accident.

Vera's illegitimate brother Cy Draven (Daryl McCormack) aspires to a political career and obsesses over social media to chronicle his interactions; and Lee Ross (Andrew Scott) seeks to regain acclaim as a writer but now obsesses with conspiracy theories.

Rounding out the prayer group is Martha, the reliable mainstay of Wicks' ministry. When the parishioners find out that the monsignor had not been aware of Father Jud's meeting, they abruptly leave, voicing their displeasure with what they deem a deception.

When the monsignor is mortally stabbed in a vestibule during church service, Father Jud's volatile past as a boxer renders him a prime suspect. At this point, 40 minutes into the film is when Benoit Blanc arrives on the scene.

For Police Chief Geraldine Scott (Mila Kunis), the evidence, however circumstantial, which includes video of threats to the monsignor, points to Father Jud as the likely culprit.

The master sleuth Blanc has his doubts that the young priest is guilty and sets his sights on finding the real killer. In his iconoclastic approach, Blanc is the champion of the disadvantaged and can't be swayed by public opinion.

"Wake Up Dead Man," to be true to Blanc as the skeptic who eventually finds the truth, takes an interesting turn in that Father Jud, for all his faults, is the most fascinating character for this entertaining twisted mystery story. ★



New state Laws Affecting Farms Take Effect Jan. 1

Several new state laws set to take effect this week will impact agriculture in California. Beginning Jan. 1, the cost of agricultural labor will rise as California's minimum wage increases in 2026 from \$16.50 to \$16.90 an hour. A new state law will affect the way counties in California address abandoned orchards and vineyards, which have increased pest pressures in neighboring farms in recent years as lower prices for winegrapes and tree nuts resulted in a surge in abandoned acreage. A pair of new laws will give California farmers and ranchers more options for disposal of organic waste. A different new state law will provide more opportunities for agritourism operators by reducing regulatory barriers to hosting overnight campers on working lands. And while immigration law is federal, a new California law bans the use of face coverings by law enforcement officers, possibly affecting immigration enforcement operations in the state.

Winegrape growers Continue Removing Vines Amid 'Challenging Times'

California winegrape growers continued this year to remove vineyards as the sector contends with an oversupply of grapes due to a global downturn in wine sales. Sonoma County grower Andrew Forchini said his 2025 crop turned out well, but like many winegrape growers, he struggled to sell the fruit. "It was hard to find a buyer. If you're lucky and have your crops sold,

you're doing well. But if you don't have your crops sold or have half your crops sold, it's very challenging times," Forchini told Ag Alert® in a field report, adding he had reduced his acreage in response to the winegrape market. "We removed a percentage of acreage this growing season that we couldn't sell. We're going to remove a little more."

Marin County Ranch Honored With Top Conservation Prize

Stemple Creek Ranch of Marin County is the 2025 California Leopold Conservation Award recipient. The \$10,000 award honors farmers, ranchers and forestland owners who go above and beyond in their management of soil health, water quality and wildlife habitat on working land. Loren and Lisa Poncia, owners of Stemple Creek Ranch in Tomales, were presented with the award during the California Farm Bureau Annual Meeting Dec. 8. The ranch raises organic, grass-finished beef and lamb and pastured pork, which it sells directly to consumers, grocery stores, restaurants and butcher shops. The 650 acres they own and much of what they lease has Marin Agricultural Land Trust agricultural conservation easements on them. This ensures that the land will be conserved as open space and in productive agricultural use in perpetuity. "We're trying to dance with Mother Nature within our fences," Loren Poncia said of his family's approach to conservation. ★



Late December Storms Deliver Much-Needed Water Supply

California Department of Water Resources News Release

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)

The Department of Water Resources (DWR) recently conducted the first snow survey of the season at Phillips Station. The manual survey recorded 24 inches of snow depth and a snow water equivalent of 5 inches, which is 50 percent of average for this location.

The snow water equivalent measures the amount of water contained in the snowpack and is a key component of the Department of Water Resource's water supply forecast. Statewide, the snowpack is 71 percent of average for this date.

Today's results are welcome news for water managers who rely on the statewide snow surveys to make water supply decisions for the year ahead. California's statewide snowpack had been lacking in early December with above-average temperatures and very little storm activity. Recent storms have turned that around and provided a significant boost to the snowpack and the state's water supply.

"The dry conditions and warmer temperatures in early December delayed our snow-building season, but the return of storm activity, especially in the last week, helped to build a solid base for this year's snowpack," said Angelique Fabbiani-Leon, State Hydrometeorologist for the Department of Water Resources.

"Thankfully, the recent storms that reached the state were cold enough to provide necessary benefits for the snowpack and our water supply. While California is in a better position now, it is still early in the season and our state's water supply for this year will ultimately depend on a continued cadence of storms throughout winter and early spring."

The Department of Water Resource's electronic readings from 130 stations placed throughout the Sierra Nevada indicate that the statewide snowpack's snow



An aerial view in the morning of fog partially covering the San Joaquin River and Webb Tract Island (Left) in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, located in San Joaquin County, California. Photo taken Oct. 30, 2025. Courtesy photo

water equivalent is 6.5 inches, or 71 percent of average for this date, compared to 115 percent on this date last year.

On average, the largest snow-producing months in the Sierra Nevada are January, February and March. Drought and flood always marked the California climate, but extreme whiplash between wet and dry is becoming more pronounced, not just year to year but often within the same season or month.

"It's great to see so much fresh snow in the Sierra following a relatively dry December," said Department of Water Resources director Karla Nemeth.

"More than any other factor, the rain and snow that falls in these critical winter months dictates how much water can be delivered to Californians and farmland statewide. We make the most of



Department of Water Resources staff check snow levels at the January 2020 snow survey. Courtesy photo

what Mother Nature delivers with advance planning that enables Forecast Informed Reservoir Operations and groundwater recharge."

Major reservoirs statewide are

currently 123 percent of average thanks to recent precipitation on top of three consecutive years of above-average snowpack conditions.

On average, the Sierra

snowpack supplies about 30 percent of California's water needs. Its natural ability to store water is why the Sierra snowpack is often referred to as California's "frozen reservoir." Data from these snow surveys and forecasts produced by the Department of Water Resource's Snow Surveys and Water Supply Forecasting Unit are key factors in determining how the Department of Water Resources manages the state's water resources.

The Department of Water Resources conducts four media-oriented snow surveys at Phillips Station each winter near the first of each month, January through April and, if necessary, May. The next survey is tentatively scheduled for Feb. 3.

For California's current hydrological conditions, visit <https://cww.water.ca.gov>. ★

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Ask DR. UNIVERSE

What came first, the chicken or the egg?

-Everybody

I get amazing questions from curious kids all over the world. So many of you want to know whether chickens or eggs came first. It turns out, that's one of the first questions I ever received—way back in 2001. A lot has changed since then. But a lot has stayed the same, including my answer, which was originally in the form of a comic.



To find out the answer, I read my notes from my late friend Ken Kardong, former zoologist at Washington State University. He had told me the chicken evolved millions of years after the egg. Amphibians were the first vertebrates to crawl up from the water onto land. Even today, amphibians lay their soft-shell eggs in water or moist places, so they don't dry out. Reptiles evolved from amphibians. Their eggs are hard shelled. This keeps them from drying out and allows reptiles to reproduce on land. Modern life is the result of millions of years of species adapting to their environments. That's how the eggs of some amphibians gradually got harder. It's how a branch of amphibians with harder eggs became reptiles. And reptiles gradually evolved into birds—like chickens. I guess it was a long journey from the first egg to the very first chicken. Here's to 25 more excellent years as your resident science cat.

Sincerely,
Dr. Universe

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@sbcglobal.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@troop-152dixon.com for more information. Check us out on the web @ troop-152dixon.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 ohpt01525@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.nsdcd@gmail.com. Visit our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/northernolanodem/.

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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WE SUPPORT FIRST RESPONDERS

New Year May Entertain Political Junkies, but Sluggish Economy Deserves the Spotlight



By Dan Walters, CALMatters.org

As the new year begins, there's no shortage of political trends to keep Californians preoccupied, entertained or perhaps appalled — particularly the state's transcontinental feud with President Donald Trump.

There is Gov. Gavin Newsom's all-but-announced campaign for president, centered on his self-appointed role of resistor-in-chief to Trump. As Newsom continues to troll Trump this year we may learn whether it continues to advance Newsom as a White House frontrunner or becomes tiresome and off-putting.

As 2025 ended Axios, a news website, reported that Newsom's potential rivals are ratcheting up efforts to undermine his bid, arguing that, as a California progressive, he's unelectable.

Another point of political fixation is Newsom's successful effort to gerrymander California's 52 congressional seats to help Democrats recapture control of the House in 2026. Whether it works is a question hanging over his presidential ambitions.

Still another is the campaign to choose a successor to Newsom. It so far has attracted a large contingent of Democrats without, as yet, a clear leader. There's a theoretical possibility that with as many as a dozen Democrats in the field, the

two Republicans could finish first and second in the June 2 primary and face each other for the governorship in November, despite the GOP's very weak standing among voters.

This year's election cycle also promises to be another showdown of moneyed interests via dueling ballot measures, with those either increasing or decreasing taxes at the top of the heap.

While political junkies can feed their habits this year, the more profound issue that faces California will be its moribund economy.

Newsom often brags that California's \$4 trillion economy, were it a nation, would rank fourth in the world. However, it has seen zero net job growth since the COVID-19 pandemic ended and recently has experienced employment shrinkage.

More than a million Californians in the labor force are jobless and the state's unemployment rate, currently 5.6%, has been the highest or near the highest of any state for several years.

Employment doldrums have affected even the state's hallmark sectors, most obviously Southern California's withering film and TV production industry and the Bay Area's high technology concentration.

The latter has almost single-handedly propped up the state's economy and generated a huge portion of tax revenues, but layoffs have proliferated as artificial intelligence is increasingly employed — a syndrome that also affects Hollywood.

Stubborn, or even increasing, unemployment makes it more difficult for state and local governments to cover their budget deficits — thus underpinning the

thrust for tax increases on state and local ballots. The sluggish economy also hampers efforts to improve two of the state's most pressing socioeconomic issues, its highest-in-the-nation poverty and homelessness levels.

Even Californians who have homes and jobs are feeling the economic pinch. Combining economic data with polling results, the Public Policy Institute of California recently discovered rising economic angst among California residents.

"California is one of the largest economies in the world, but many working Californians do not feel economically secure (and) they struggle to pay their bills, save for the future, and balance the demands of work and daily life," PPIC reported, adding that polling data "indicate that pessimism about future economic opportunity has become even more pervasive amid recent economic volatility."

As he shifts into presidential campaign mode, Newsom has every reason to keep bragging about the state's economy. But those running to replace him and state legislators should make 2026 the year to recognize that California has serious problems, to bore into the underlying causes and to do what they can to once again make California thrive.

History tells us that taking prosperity for granted — think Detroit — is an invitation to economic ruin.

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. ★

Kings Korner

By V.G. Harris



On Dec. 27 the Sacramento Kings treated the hometown fans to a post-Christmas treat with a stirring 113-107 victory over the visiting Dallas Mavericks. It was a reminder that although Dallas is a notable team with playoff intentions, the Kings have the talent to match up nightly with any team in the NBA. They have demonstrated this repeatedly, but the conundrum has been a complete lack of consistency as it relates to game over game results.

Why, you ask? The singular question that begs for an answer.

Injuries have played a role to be certain, but every NBA club must contend with injuries.

If I had to answer this question as honestly as I could, I would turn to the one player on this year's squad that has the greatest impact and that is none other than Domantas Sabonis. Over the past 3 1/2 seasons Domantas hasn't just led the NBA in rebounding and double-doubles, he's been the singular stabilizing influence on a team that needs a leader like none-other. Sabonis' nightly consistent reinforcement of the fundamentals in playing the paint the old-fashioned way, gives every player on the floor a boost of confidence.

Domantas has a motor that just won't quit, and his enthusiasm for the game of basketball is simply contagious. Players want to play with this guy, and former King Jonas Valanciunas was vocal in his admiration for Sabonis and his desire to play alongside the Kings big man.

Unfortunately, the Kings did not value the talent that Valanciunas brought to the floor and allowed him to walk out the back door. Denver did not hesitate to provide their multiple MVP center Nikola Jokic with a resplendent backup, and Valanciunas has thrived this season in his new role.

The number one problem the Kings have had to face this season is not having Domantas on the floor, and their record shows it. 8 wins in 35 contests matches the worst start for an NBA season in the Sacramento Kings franchise history, and this is not a record you want to be a part of. Getting Sabonis back on the floor will be the first step in establishing what this year's team really is, but the Kings face a real dilemma.

GM Scott Perry is making noises that this year's team is about to receive a complete face lift, and Domantas Sabonis name has been mentioned or at least rumored in possible trade rumors. That would be mistake of herculean proportions.

Breaking news, the grass is not always greener on the other side.

Do you not remember what the organization did just one year ago when it inexplicably sent face of the franchise DeAaron Fox to the San Antonio Spurs?

DO NOT trade Domantas Sabonis. Draw a line in the sand, NOW, and build around a player that gets fans on their feet every game!

Stop trading away talent that makes other NBA teams stronger such as Davion Mitchell, DeAaron Fox, Issac Jones, and Boston Celtic starting center Neemias Queta. Yes, Neemias Queta, that the Kings had the good sense to draft 39th overall in the 2021 NBA draft and then send him to the G league where he thrived.

Fans saw something in this raw rookie and gave him more votes than any other King when it came to All-star voting that season.

The front office saw things differently and waived Queta in August 2023, and he was immediately scooped up by the Boston Celtics. Signed to a 2-way contract, Queta went on to help Boston win and NBA championship that same season and has since worked his way up to become this year's starting center. In the recent 120-106 loss to the Celtics, Queta provided the Kings with an up front and personal look at why their decision to let him go should have been reconsidered. Queta held down the paint efficiently all night, while posting 13 points, 5 rebounds, and 3 big blocks.

Simply stated, the Sacramento Kings must stop giving away valuable NBA talent and find someone in the organization that can effectively grade players and determine who is and who is not a viable NBA player.

Stay tuned Kings fans because Domantas will hopefully return soon, and then we can see what this team can do with a true NBA center on the floor.

Happy New Year Kings fans and by all means do not give up hope! ★

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FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENTS

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 2025001568
The following persons are doing business as: James Boat Fiberglass & Upholstery, 420 Gateway Drive Suite A, Dixon, CA 95620.
James Darren White, 420 Gateway Drive Suite A, Dixon, CA 95620.
Date filed in Solano County: October 24, 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 October 23, 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: Dec 19, 26, Jan 2, 9, 2026
JAMES 1-9-26

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 2025001739
The following persons are doing business as: Mountain Mikes Pizza, 1700 N 1st Street, Dixon, CA 95620.
Dixon Food Ventures LLC, 725 Martingale Court, Dixon, CA 95620.
Date filed in Solano County: December 5, 2025. The Registrant commenced to transact business under the above business name on: August 15, 2025
This Business is conducted by: A Limited Liability Company. NOTICE: In Accordance with subdivision (a) of section 17920 A Fictitious Name Statement generally expires at the end of five years from the date on which it was filed in the office of the county clerk, except as provided in subdivision (b) of section 17920, where it expires 40 days after any change in the facts set forth in the statement pursuant to section 17913 other than a change in the residence address of registered owner. A new fictitious Business name statement must be filed before the expiration December 4, 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: Dec 19, 26, Jan 2, 9, 2026
MOUNTAIN 1-9-26

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 2025001652
The following persons are doing business as: Oplent

Provenance, 288 Gardenstone Place, Fairfield, CA 94533.
Alfred Mitchell Sanedrin, 288 Gardenstone Place, Fairfield, CA 94533.
Date filed in Solano County: November 17, 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 16, 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: Dec 19, 26, Jan 2, 9, 2026
OPLUNT 1-9-26

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 2025001790
The following persons are doing business as: Fuel For Function, 7158 Browns Valley Road, Vacaville, CA 95688.
Fuel For Function LLC, 7158 Browns Valley, Vacaville, CA 95688.
Date filed in Solano County: December 16, 2025. The Registrant commenced to transact business under the above business name on: N/A
This Business is conducted by: A Limited Liability Company. NOTICE: In Accordance with subdivision (a) of section 17920 A Fictitious Name Statement generally expires at the end of five years from the date on which it was filed in the office of the county clerk, except as provided in subdivision (b) of section 17920, where it expires 40 days after any change in the facts set forth in the statement pursuant to section 17913 other than a change in the residence address of registered owner. A new fictitious Business name statement must be filed before the expiration December 15, 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: Dec 26, Jan 2, 9, 16, 2026
FUEL 1-16-26

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 2025001794
The following persons are doing business as: Arjan Transport, 965 Walton Court, Dixon, CA 95620.
Gurdeep Singh, 965 Walton Court, Dixon, CA 95620.
Date filed in Solano County: December 16, 2025. The Registrant commenced to trans-

act business under the above business name on: October 31, 2005
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 December 15, 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: Dec 26, Jan 2, 9, 16, 2026
ARJAN 1-16-26

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE CHANGE OF NAME

SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA COUNTY OF SOLANO ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE CHANGE OF NAME CASE #CU25-10909
Ignacio Efrain Villasenor Torres filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows: Ignacio Efrain Villasenor Torres to Ignacio Efrain Villasenor. 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. March 2, 2026, 10:00 a.m. Department 7, Room 2, 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: December 3, 2025
Publish: January 2, 9, 16, 23, 2026
TORRES 1-23-26

SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA COUNTY OF SOLANO ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE CHANGE OF NAME CASE #CU25-11717
Desiree Kojak filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows: Silas Thomas Kojak to Silas Thomas Basquez. 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. March 16, 2026, 10:00 a.m. Department 7, Room 2, 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: December 22, 2025
Publish: January 9, 16, 23, 30, 2026
KOJAK 1-30-26

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

NOTICE TO CREDITORS PROBATE CODE § 19003 CASE NO. PR25-00759
IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA COUNTY OF SOLANO
IN RE: THE 2009 RONNIE DEAN FRYE AND DENISE MILLER FRYE REVOCABLE TRUST RONNIE DEAN FRYE: Deceased.
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN to the creditors and contingent creditors of the Decedent, RONNIE DEAN FRYE, deceased June 17, 2025, that all persons and entities having claims against the Decedent are required to file a creditors claim with the Solano County Superior Court, 600 Union Avenue, Fairfield, California 94533, and mail a copy to Gary R. Lieberman, Esq. 7 Mt. Lassen Drive, Suite A-150, San Rafael, California, Attorney for Trustee, within four (4) months after the date of first publication of Notice to Creditors, or if notice is mailed or personally delivered to you, within thirty (30) days after the date this notice is mailed or personally delivered to you. A claim form may be obtained from the court clerk. For your protection, you are encouraged to file your claim by certified mail with return receipt requested. Dated: November 17, 2025 Gary R. Lieberman, Esq. Attorney Denise Miller Frye
Published 12/26/2025.
01/02/2026. 01/09/2026
FRYE DIXON 1-9-26

TRUSTEE SALE

NOTICE OF TRUSTEE'S SALE
TS No. CA-25-1011391-AB
Order No.: 250171552-CA-VOI
YOU ARE IN DEFAULT UNDER A DEED OF TRUST DATED 6/9/2022. UNLESS YOU TAKE ACTION TO PROTECT YOUR PROPERTY, IT MAY BE SOLD AT A PUBLIC SALE. IF YOU NEED AN EXPLANATION OF THE NATURE OF THE PROCEEDING AGAINST YOU, YOU SHOULD CONTACT A LAWYER. A public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash, or cash equivalent if deemed acceptable to the trustee, cashier's check drawn on a state or national bank, check drawn by state or federal credit union, or a check drawn by a state or federal savings and loan association, or savings association, or savings bank specified in Section 5102 to the Financial Code and authorized to do business in this state, will be held by duly appointed trustee. The sale will be made, but without covenant or warranty, expressed or implied, regarding title, possession, or encumbrances, to pay the remaining principal sum of the note(s) secured by the Deed of Trust, with interest and late charges thereon, as provided in the note(s), advances, under the terms of the Deed of Trust, interest thereon, fees, charges and expenses of the Trustee for the total amount (at the time of the initial publication of the Notice of Sale) reasonably estimated to be set forth below. The amount may be greater on the day of sale. **BENEFICIARY MAY ELECT TO BID LESS THAN THE TOTAL AMOUNT**

DUE. Trustor(s): **TAMMY STEWART, A MARRIED WOMAN AS HER SOLE AND SEPARATE PROPERTY**
Recorded: **6/10/2022** as **Instrument No. 202200040584** of Official Records in the office of the Recorder of **SOLANO** County, California; Date of Sale: **1/22/2026 at 9:30 AM** Place of Sale: **At the Santa Clara Street entrance to the City Hall, 555 Santa Clara Street, Vallejo, CA 94590** Amount of unpaid balance and other charges: **\$723,213.64**
The purported property address is: **625 CYPRESS ST, DIXON, CA 95620** Assessor's Parcel No.: **0114-143-100** All bidders, at the date, time, and place of the scheduled sale, will be required to show satisfactory support to the auctioneer of their ability to pay the amount they intend to bid, unless arrangements have been made with the trustee prior to the scheduled sale. **NOTICE TO POTENTIAL BIDDERS:** If you are considering bidding on this property lien, you should understand that there are risks involved in bidding at a trustee auction. You will be bidding on a lien, not on the property itself. Placing the highest bid at a trustee auction does not automatically entitle you to free and clear ownership of the property. You should also be aware that the lien being auctioned off may be a junior lien. If you are the highest bidder at the auction, you are or may be responsible for paying off all liens senior to the lien being auctioned off, before you can receive clear title to the property. You are encouraged to investigate the existence, priority, and size of outstanding liens that may exist on this property by contacting the county recorder's office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge you a fee for this information. If you consult either of these resources, you should be aware that the same lender may hold more than one mortgage or deed of trust on the property. **NOTICE TO PROPERTY OWNER:** The sale date shown on this notice of sale may be postponed one or more times by the mortgagee, beneficiary, trustee, or a court, pursuant to Section 2924g of the California Civil Code. The law requires that information about trustee sale postponements be made available to you and to the public, as a courtesy to those not present at the sale. If you wish to learn whether your sale date has been postponed, and, if applicable, the rescheduled time and date for the sale of this property, you may call **866-539-4173** for information regarding the trustee's sale or visit this internet website **http://www.qualityloan.com**, using the file number assigned to this foreclosure by the Trustee: **CA-25-1011391-AB**. Information about postponements that are very short in duration or that occur close in time to the scheduled sale may not immediately be reflected in the telephone information or on the internet website. The best way to verify postponement information is to attend the scheduled sale. **NOTICE TO TENANT:** You may have a right to purchase this property after the trustee auction pursuant to Section 2924m of the California Civil Code. If you are an "eligible tenant buyer," you can purchase the property if you match the last and highest bid placed at the trustee auction. If you are an "eligible bidder," you may be able to purchase the property if you exceed the last and highest bid placed at the trustee auction. There are three steps to exercising this right of purchase. First, 48 hours after the date of the trustee sale, you can call **619-645-7711**, or visit this internet website

http://www.qualityloan.com, using the file number assigned to this foreclosure by the Trustee: **CA-25-1011391-AB** to find the date on which the trustee's sale was held, the amount of the last and highest bid, and the address of the trustee. Second, you must send a written notice of intent to place a bid so that the trustee receives it no more than 15 days after the trustee's sale. Third, you must submit a bid so that the trustee receives it no more than 45 days after the trustee's sale. If you think you may qualify as an "eligible tenant buyer" or "eligible bidder," you should consider contacting an attorney or appropriate real estate professional immediately for advice regarding this potential right to purchase. **NOTICE TO PROSPECTIVE OWNER-OCCUPANT:** Any prospective owner-occupant as defined in Section 2924m of the California Civil Code who is the last and highest bidder at the trustee's sale shall provide the required affidavit or declaration of eligibility to the auctioneer at the trustee's sale or shall have it delivered to QUALITY LOAN SERVICE CORPORATION by 5 p.m. on the next business day following the trustee's sale at the address set forth in the below signature block. **NOTICE TO PROSPECTIVE POST-SALE OVER BIDDERS:** For post-sale information in accordance with Section 2924m(e) of the California Civil Code, use file number CA-25-1011391-AB and call (866) 645-7711 or login to: **http://www.qualityloan.com**. The above statutorily mandated notices to Tenant, Prospective Owner-Occupant, and Prospective Post-Sale Over Bidders are brief summaries of what may be required under Section 2924m of the California Civil Code. Compliance with all relevant provisions will be required. The undersigned Trustee disclaims any liability for any incorrectness of the property address or other common designation, if any, shown herein. If no street address or other common designation is shown, directions to the location of the property may be obtained by sending a written request to the beneficiary within 10 days of the date of first publication of this Notice of Sale. If the sale is set aside for any reason, including if the Trustee is unable to convey title, the Purchaser at the sale shall be entitled only to a return of the monies paid to the Trustee. This shall be the Purchaser's sole and exclusive remedy. The purchaser shall have no further recourse against the Trustor, the Trustee, the Beneficiary, the Beneficiary's Agent, or the Beneficiary's Attorney. If you have previously been discharged through bankruptcy, you may have been released of personal liability for this loan in which case this letter is intended to exercise the note holders rights against the real property only. Date: **QUALITY LOAN SERVICE CORPORATION 2763 Camino Del Rio S San Diego, CA 92108 619-645-7711 For NON SALE information only Sale Line: 866-539-4173 Or Login to: http://www.qualityloan.com Post-Sale Information (CCC 2924m(e)): (866) 645-7711 Reinstatement or Payoff Line: (866) 645-7711 Ext 5318 QUALITY LOAN SERVICE CORPORATION TS No.: CA-25-1011391-AB** IDs
Pub #0282138 12/26/2025 1/2/2026 1/9/2026
DIXON INDEPENDENT VOICE 1-9-26

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the undersigned will conduct a Lien Sale Auction on January 28th, 2026, at 10:00 AM. This is authorized by Division 8, Chapter IO of the California Business and Professions Code. CASH ONLY. All items must be removed from the property immediately after sale.

DIXON SELF STORAGE
1410 REGENCY PKWY
DIXON, CA 95620-4500

UNIT C027 - JESSICA RODRIGUEZ- mattress set, bassinet, dresser, suitcase. Kids bike, desk, lamps, misc., bags and boxes
UNIT A050 - GROVER KITTLING- clothes, clothes rack, clothes closet, misc. bags and totes with household items.
Dixon Independent Voice 1-2, 1-9-2026



Parks and Recreation Offers Fun for All Ages



Dixon's Parks and Recreation Department offers a multitude of classes and activities for kids and teens, such as Junior Culinary Creators, Lifeguard Training and Babysitting 101. Photo courtesy of City of Dixon

By Kendall Brown

DIXON, CA (MPG) - City of Dixon's Parks and Recreation Department is offering a range of upcoming classes and programs aimed at serving residents of all ages, from youth and teens to seniors, as the department continues to expand its seasonal offerings.

Austin George, recreation manager for the City of Dixon, said he has held the position for three years and has worked for the city for seven years overall.

"It's been a great opportunity to grow with the department and continue building on the strong foundation that was already here," said George.

According to George, the department's mission is centered around accessibility and community needs.

"Our goal is to provide safe and welcoming recreational opportunities for all ages," said George. "We

want our parks and programs to reflect the interests of Dixon residents."

Among the multitude of programs is Babysitting 101, which took place Dec. 29 and 30. The class is designed for youth ages 11 to 15 and provides foundational childcare and safety training. Participants learn how to supervise children, manage routines and behavior, respond to emergencies and communicate effectively. The course includes American Red Cross certification in pediatric CPR and first aid. Babysitting 101 is scheduled to return Feb. 20.

"Providing babysitting education at that stage helps develop safe habits early, build confidence and understand what it really means to be trusted with caring for younger children," said George.

The department is also offering lifeguard training beginning Feb. 28 at the Pat Granucci Aquatics Center, 450 E. Mayes St. According

to George, programs such as Babysitting 101 and lifeguard training help teens build job-ready skills while supporting community safety.

"They give teens practical skills that can lead to their first jobs and leadership roles," said George. "At the same time, these programs promote community safety."

Additional youth programming includes culinary classes hosted at the Senior Multi-Use Center, 201 S. Fifth St.

"My Mini Chef & Me" is scheduled for Jan. 15 for \$65 for residents, while "Junior Culinary Creators" will be held Jan. 16 for \$75. Non-resident fees apply for both classes.

George said the department plans to continue expanding offerings into 2026 while balancing resources and community interest.

"We're looking at opportunities in areas like youth cooking classes, drop-in

volleyball and junior lifeguard training," said George. "Our goal is to respond to what the community is asking for."

According to George, program decisions are guided by participation data, staffing availability, facilities, budget considerations and community feedback. Surveys, participant comments and day-to-day interactions help shape future offerings.

Dixon's senior community remains a key focus of the department. Current programs include low-impact fitness, bingo, bunco, sewing and crafts, line dancing, technology assistance and lunches on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Looking ahead to early 2026, George said seniors can expect continued programming along with additions such as fall prevention and diabetes education classes.

The department works to keep programs affordable



Dixon's senior community remains a key focus of the department. Current programs include low-impact fitness, bingo, bunco, sewing and crafts, line dancing, technology assistance and lunches on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Photo courtesy of City of Dixon



The department will also offer lifeguard training beginning Feb. 28 at the Pat Granucci Aquatics Center, 450 E. Mayes St. Photo by Debra Dingman

and accessible, with fees reviewed annually by the City Council and scheduling designed to accommodate a wide range of participants.

For residents who have not yet participated in Parks and Recreation programs, George encourages them to get involved.

"I'd encourage them to try just something that catches their eye," said George. "There really is something for almost every

age and interest."

George also expressed appreciation for those who support the department.

"I want to thank our staff, instructors, volunteers, partner organizations and the residents who participate and support our programs," said George.

For more information or to register, residents can visit cityofdixonca.parks-rec.tylerapp.com or email dixonrecreation@cityofdixonca.gov. ★

Students in California Struggling Most with Math

Find a Super Tutor News Release

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - While the Christmas break is upon us, many students will be studying at home over the festive period and may be wondering how to receive a little extra support for the subject they find the hardest.

With this in mind, education recruitment agency Find a Super Tutor investigated the subjects that students in the US are struggling with the most.

The research analyzed the total number of Google searches for 118 subjects, applying 13 different search combinations for each, such as "help with mathematics" and "chemistry tutoring". Then, the ranking was calculated based on the subjects with the most to least average Google searches per month across the nation and in each state.

Mathematics was revealed to be the subject that California was struggling with the most, with a monthly average of 18,256 Google searches inquiring about help with the subject. Ranking as the subject with second-highest number of inquiries was Programming, with an average of 7,473 searches per month.

Following in third was Spanish, with an average monthly search count of 7,228, whereas English Language followed in fourth with an average of 7,083 searches per month. Rounding out the top five was Calculus, with a monthly average of 1,995 searches.

Mathematics was revealed to be the subject that students were struggling with the most across the US, with a monthly average of 125,929 Google searches inquiring about help with the subject.

Other subjects that students struggled with were SAT Prep, with an average of 7,552 monthly searches, and Calculus, with an average of 6,857 monthly searches, whereas Japanese completed the top 10, averaging 6,718 monthly searches.

Commenting on the findings, Joshua James, director of Find a Super Tutor, said,

"There are strong patterns among the subjects that students are struggling with the most. Most of the subjects fall under either the STEM or languages category. Some of the hardest school subjects to learn include mathematics and other

scientific disciplines such as programming, information technology, chemistry and calculus. These subjects can be challenging for students because they involve abstract concepts, logical reasoning, and require learners to memorize large amounts of information.

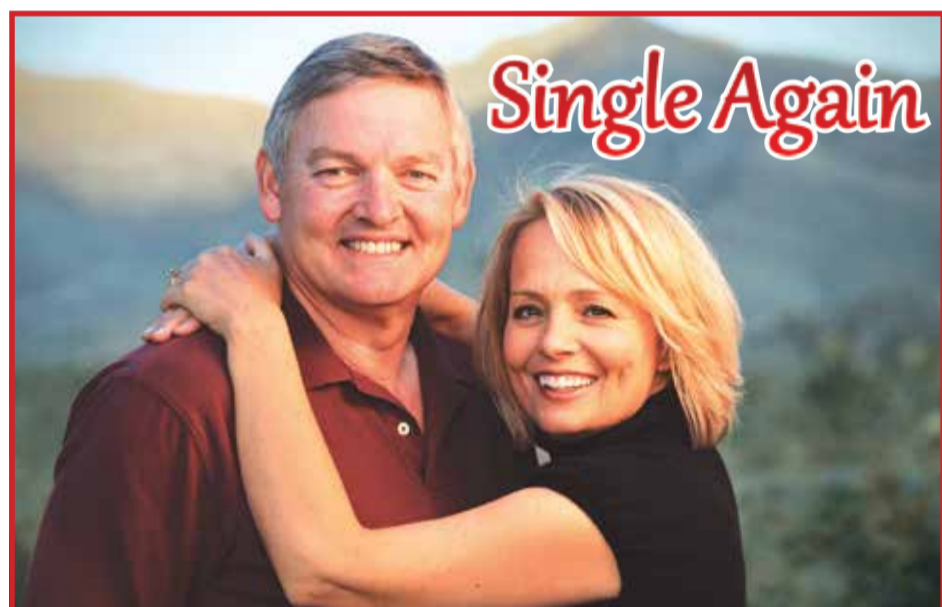
"For instance, calculus requires a solid foundation in algebra and trigonometry, and without this, students can quickly fall behind. Similarly, programming and IT demand not only technical knowledge but also the ability to think algorithmically and troubleshoot complex problems. Students who struggle in STEM often benefit from interactive tools like coding simulators, virtual labs, and personalized tutoring platforms, which allow for a more hands-on and tailored learning experience.

"Language subjects also pose challenges, but of a different nature. English and foreign languages such as Spanish, Japanese, and American Sign Language require mastery of vocabulary, grammar, and cultural context, all of which can vary widely from a student's native language."

"Japanese, for example, has multiple writing systems and a syntax that significantly differs from English, while ASL relies on spatial reasoning and visual cues that are not intuitive for everyone. Even English, often assumed to be straightforward for native speakers, contains complex grammar rules and idiomatic expressions that can confuse learners.

"Online support for language learning has become highly sophisticated, with resources like language exchange communities, immersive audio-visual content, and AI-powered apps such as Duolingo offering real-time feedback and personalized practice routines. These tools can significantly enhance engagement and retention, helping students overcome the hurdles these subjects often present.

"Regardless of what subject you or your child is struggling with, there is always support available. If you need help beyond what online resources may be able to offer, hiring a part-time tutor can be the perfect solution. Tutors are typically experts in their chosen area and can provide specialized, high-quality support to improve grades and understanding of the subject." ★



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