

AFTER FIVE

THE NORTH STATE MAGAZINE

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THE NEWS, ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT MONTHLY

ON THE COVER

GRAMMY GUITARIST

If you're coming to see 2024 Grammy winner Tommy Emmanuel at the Cascade Theatre on March 6, be prepared. You never know what you're going to get from his setlist. Read the After Five interview, page 7

BEING EARNEST

Shasta College will turn back the clock to the 19th century – with a slight adjustment to the 20th century



*– as they present Oscar Wilde's final play, the farcical comedy *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Pictured here are Rudy Lurghigian, who portrays Algernon Moncrieff, and Mercedes*

Moutard, who plays Cecily Cardew. See page 2

LIGHTNING THIEF

*The Cascade Theatre is looking to attract younger audiences with their spring musical, *The Lightning Thief: The Percy Jackson Musical*. See page 14*

FIVE WOMEN

*Alan Ball, who won the Academy Award for Best Original Screenplay for *American Beauty*, is the playwright for the latest Riverfront Playhouse production, *Five Women Wearing the Same Dress*. See page 10*





PHOTO and COVER PHOTO / Peter Griggs for Shasta College

Shasta College cast members and the parts they play in *The Importance of Being Earnest* include, left to right: Rudy Lurchigian (Algernon Moncrieff), Mercedes Moutard (Cecily Cardew), Mat McDonald (Lady Bracknell), Grace Coe (Gwendolyn Fairfax) and Silar Harris (Jack Worthing).

College stages Oscar Wilde's 'The Importance of Being Earnest'

Shasta College will turn back the clock to the 19th century – with a slight adjustment to the 20th century - as they present Oscar Wilde's final play, the farcical comedy *The Importance of Being Earnest*, scheduled to run for seven performances from March 8-17.

"Hanging out with a wit as sharp and as absurd as Oscar Wilde's is always a good time," Carolyn Murray, who is directing the play, said in an email as to why this play was chosen for the college's spring production.

"It's a favorite amongst us theatre makers," added Murray, who has an MFA in theatre and has directed locally and in the Bay Area, as well as occasionally acting "when needed."

From study.com, the play tells the story of two men, John (Jack) Worthing and Algernon Moncrieff, who both assume the identity of a fictional man named Ernest, leading them both to fall in love and find an assortment of problems along the way.

The full title of the work is *The Importance of Being Earnest: A Trivial Comedy for Serious People*. The title of the comedy is a play on words, with the two men deceiving those around them by using the name Ernest, while the word "earnest" means both serious and sincere. The play is anything but serious, and the characters are anything but sincere in their names.

Although originally written as a four-act play by Wilde (and sometimes presented that way), the playwright shortened it to three-acts before it

premiered in London in 1895. Shasta College will be presenting the three-act play, but updating it slightly from its original run.

"The play went on to run every year until the late 1920s," Murray said. "Each year's production was set in that year, so I decided to set our production in the 1920s to give it a fresh look. We've traded bustles and puffed sleeves for dropped waists and cool hats."

Although written in the late 1800s for an English audience, Murray said the humor is timeless and still works today.

"We are still quite ridiculous in how we assign status and worth to each other" she said. "We still play childish games. We still believe that we can make pronouncements about the way things are because we say so."

"(Wilde's) satire strikes at our human foibles in a way that transcends his place in time and geography. There are plenty of Algys and Jacks, Lady Bracknells and Lanes afoot; they just dress and sound different."

Murray said Wilde used many types of comedy, including what would end up being his final and, many say, his best play.

"His favorite is to collide incongruent elements in our value system to make fun of how ridiculous we can be," she said. "The title is making fun of the way the British class system collapses the complexity of a human being down into one data point and evaluates someone on that one thing. Your name is that data point. A good name means you are a

good person. Full stop.

"Wilde gives us silly people telling us what to believe. They make pronouncements about how the world works while playing childish games with each other. This seems to me to be an indictment of his society on the most fundamental level. He undermines every point he makes throughout the play and makes us laugh while he does it."

Murray's cast includes Silas Harris as Jack Worthing. Harris was most recently seen as Jason in *Rabbit Hole* at Riverfront Playhouse.

Rudy Lurchigian, who portrayed Antrobus in *The Skin of Our Teeth* at Shasta College, is Algernon Moncrieff.

"The Importance of Being Earnest is a great play because it is hilarious and well written," Lurchigian said, adding that the relationships and status of the characters make it really interesting.

"Redding should be excited to see this play," he added, "because it is a hilarious fun time that doesn't overstay it's welcome."

Also in the cast are:

Dalton Fitzgerald who plays two parts: Dr. Frederick Chasuble and Lane. He was seen in *The Tempest* and as Polonius in *Hamlet*, both at Axiom Repertory Theatre.

Sherry Unmack-Haines makes her debut performance as Merriman while Mat McDonald, recently seen in *Sylvia* at Axiom, is Lady Bracknell.

Mercedes Moutard portrays Cecily Cardew and Njeri Mwaniki is Miss Prism. Both were in last year's Shasta College

production of *The Sound of Music*.

And Grace Coe, who was in Shasta College's production of *The Wolves*, portrays Gwendolen Fairfax.

"Gwendolen is such a treat to play," said Coe. "Confidence is a state of mind I always try to aim for, whether it's through my clothes or my work. But Miss Fairfax just thrives in it, being unapologetically herself - in the best and worst of ways - and I live for it. She lives in her own world, and I've had so much fun encapsulating it onstage."

Coe added that, for her, the star of the show is the title's non-character.

"This may be a cop out, but I really think it's the character Earnest that makes it such a great play," she said. "He inspires absolute confidence, he's a wicked man, and the cherry-on-top is, he's not even real."

"Mistaken identities are some of my favorite tropes in comedy, and the amount of chaos and insanity that spans from Earnest will make this a wild ride for audiences. It's a classic for a reason."

"It is hilarious and fun," added Murray. "Laughing is a tonic in these troubled times (and) who doesn't love a romantic comedy?"

Tickets and Schedule

The Importance of Being Earnest is scheduled to run at the Shasta College Theatre March, 8, 9, 14, 15 and 16 at 7 p.m. and Sundays, March 10 and 17, at 2 p.m.

For tickets and more information go online to ShastaCollege.edu/ArtsEvents.

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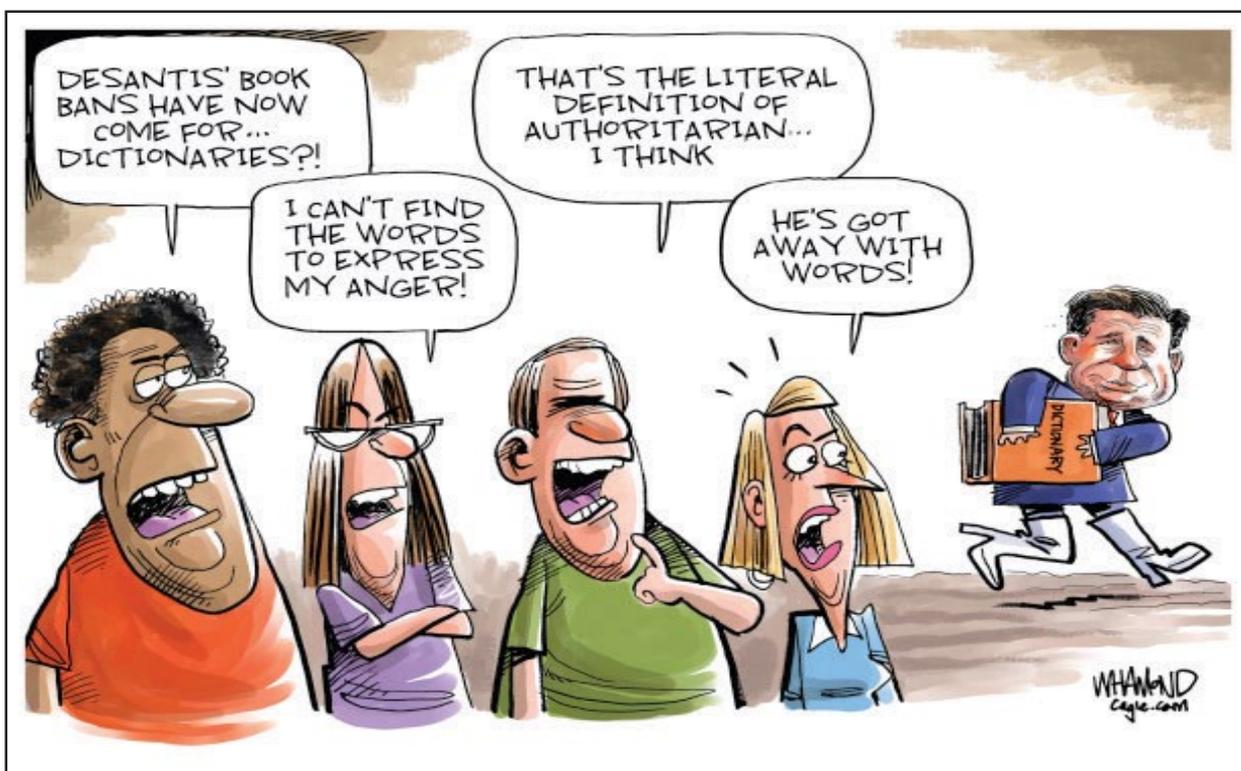
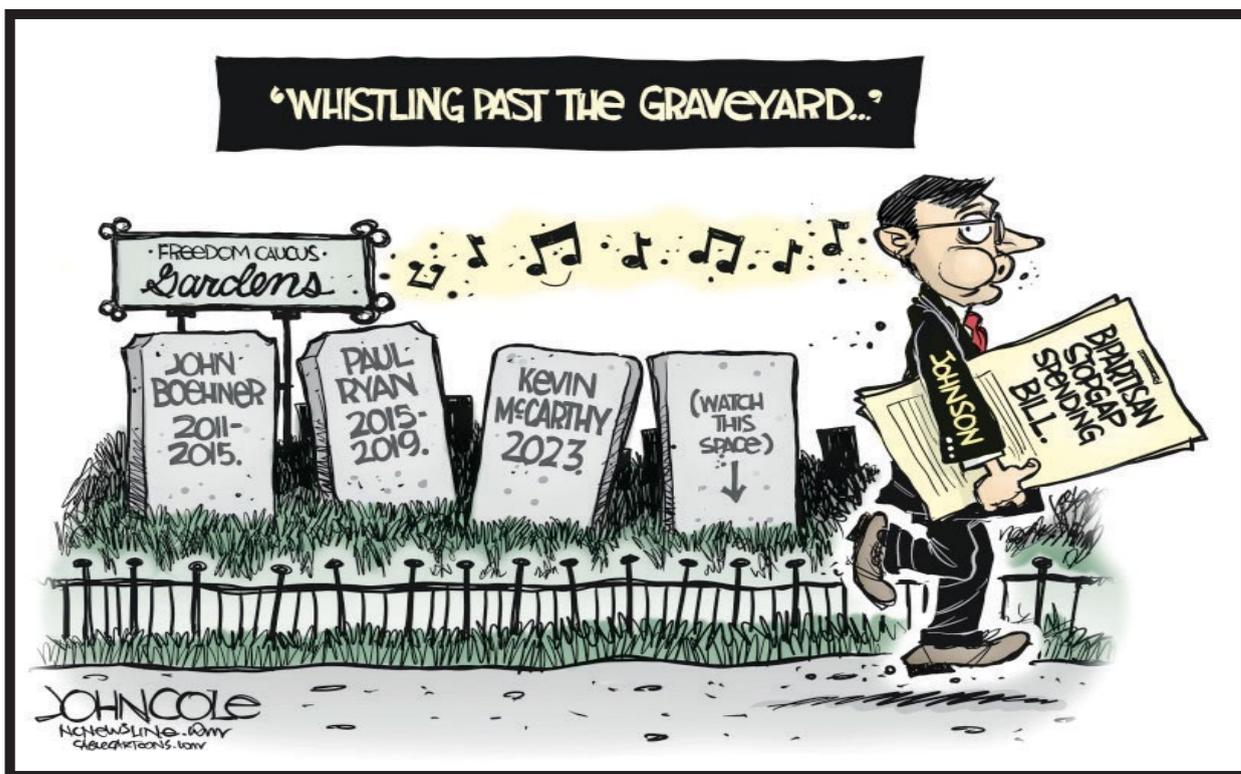
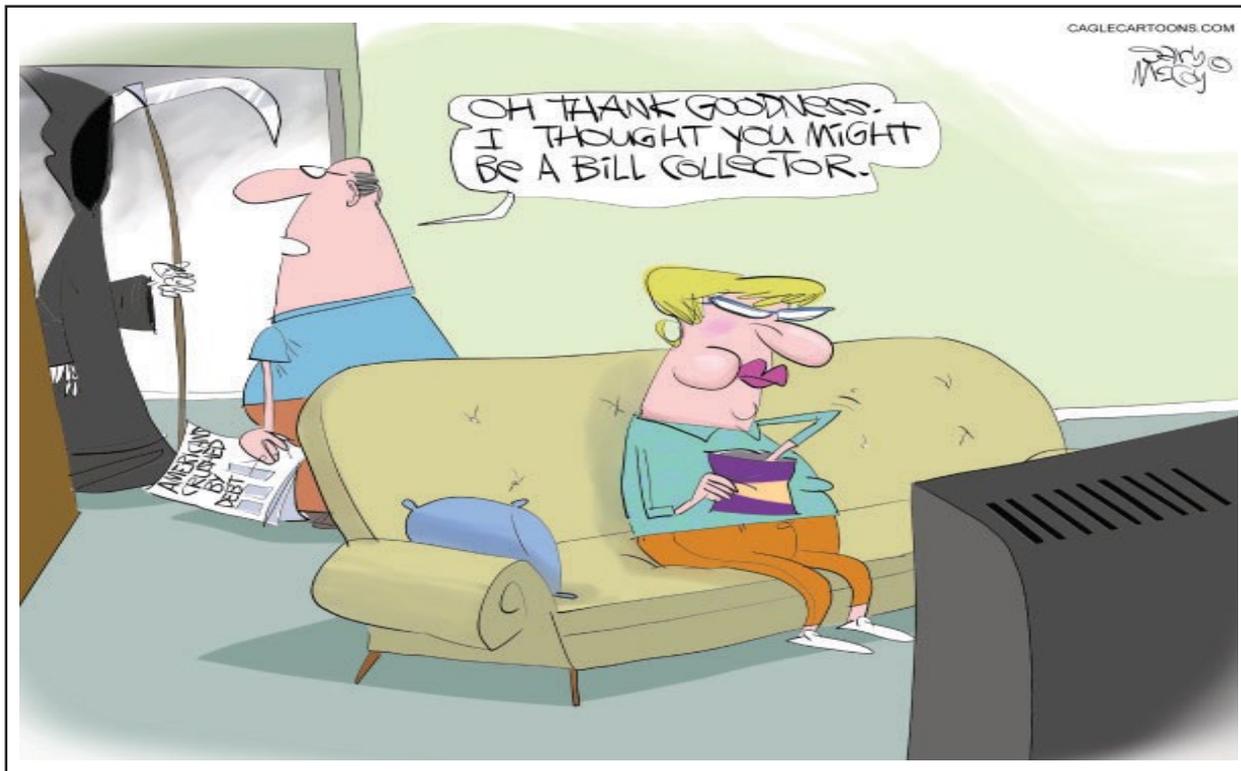
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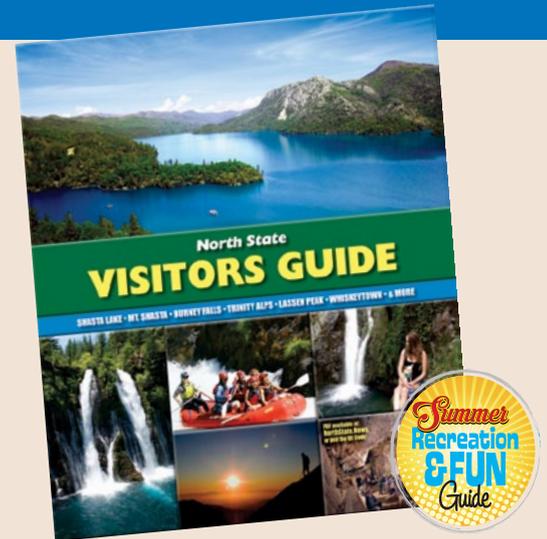
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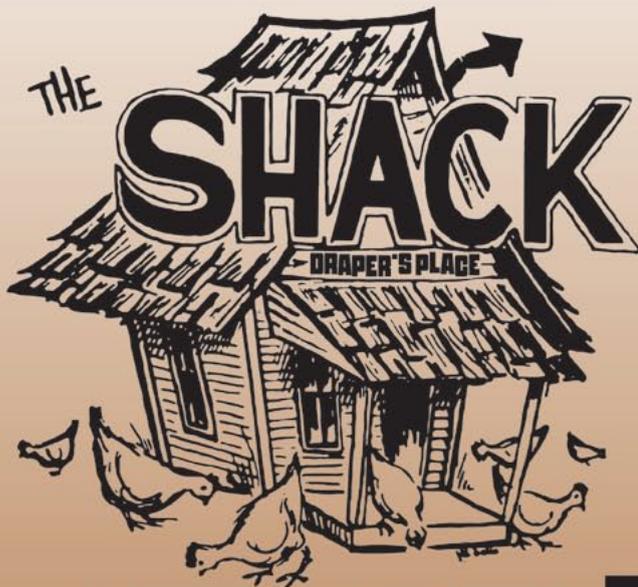


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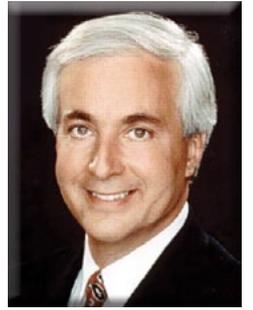
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Larry David can't curb his instincts

By Peter Funt



Larry David, Hollywood's most acclaimed curmudgeon, has apparently devised a scheme to get the last laugh with viewers and critics.

The second episode of his supposed final season of the HBO series "Curb Your Enthusiasm," which ran on Super Bowl night, provides intriguing clues for those of us who have savored all 12 seasons of David's irreverent sitcom, as we did with his earlier nine-season ode to nothing, "Seinfeld."

"Seinfeld" ended its run on NBC in May of 1998 with a finale that attracted a huge audience of 76 million—and countless more in reruns. The episode had Jerry and his pals detoured to Massachusetts where they witness an overweight guy getting carjacked at gunpoint and, rather than coming to his aid, make fat jokes. Charged with violating a local Good Samaritan law, they wind up in jail.

David has spent several decades defending the "Seinfeld" finale, which he returned to write after leaving the show for two seasons. A reviewer at "Entertainment Weekly" said, "the show's swan song was off-key and bloated."

Seinfeld, himself, had second thoughts. "I sometimes think we really shouldn't have even done it," he conceded years later. "There was a lot of pressure on us at that time to do one big last show, but big is always bad in comedy."

Now, it appears that in the final season of "Curb" David is doubling-down on the controversial plot. He and his pals find themselves in Georgia where Larry has been charged with violating election laws by bringing water to a woman who waited in the hot sun for over two hours to vote. Despite facing a fine and up to a year in prison, Larry pleads not guilty. The episode ends with the judge saying, "Trial set for 90 days hence."

That would appear to be the setting for the finale (which is scheduled for April 7). Will people from Larry's past testify to his social hostility and ill temper? Will the witnesses even include Jerry Seinfeld, Julia Louis-Dreyfus, Jason Alexander and Michael Richards, who showed up on "Curb" back in season seven?

Will Larry David make his exit with the same irreverent view of comedy, television and society that has made him a legend among the cranky?

David has long advocated what he describes as "no hugging, no learning." His characters are indifferent to the world around them, while he is annoyed by everything around him — including the oblivious masses. In a 2014 podcast interview David acknowledged the "grief" he took about the "Seinfeld" ending, but explained, "I was not interested in an emotional ride, and neither was Jerry."

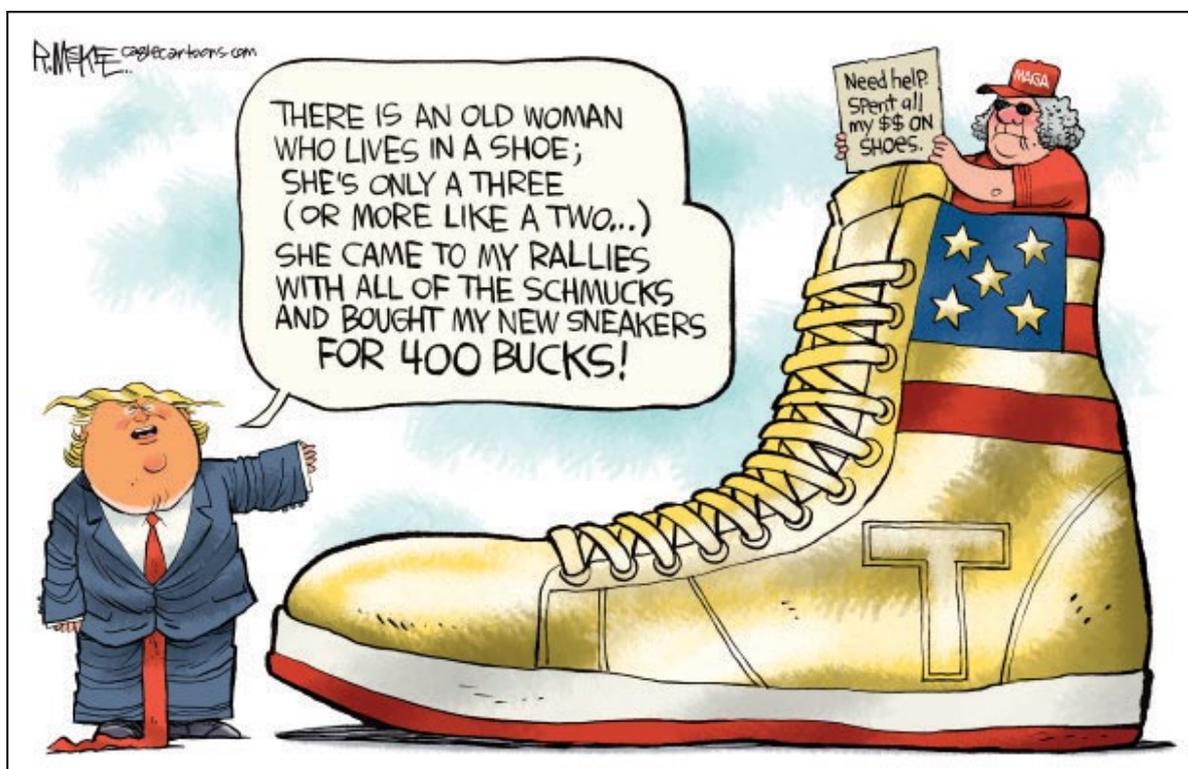
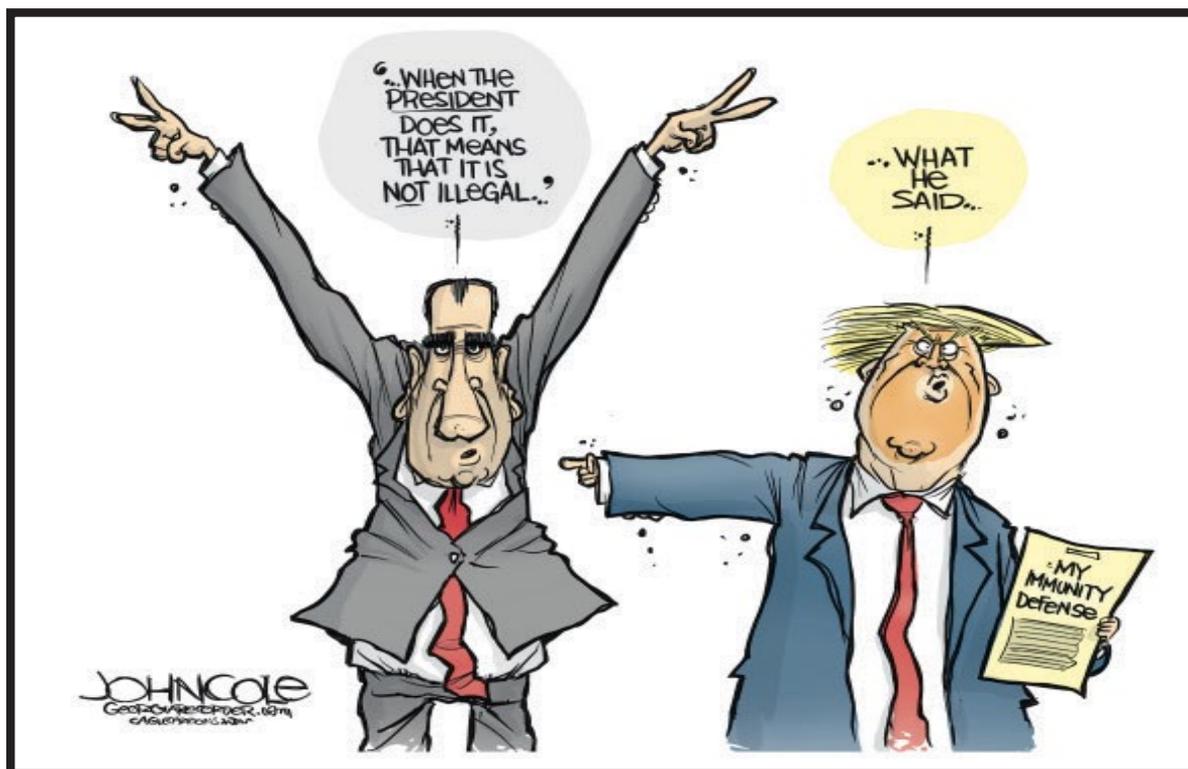
The difference, of course, between now and 1998 is that we all seem more easily annoyed by life's little insults. So maybe Larry won't go to prison. Maybe he'll persuade the court that he, like Jerry, has been right all along about confronting the absurdities around us. Maybe he'll finally be seen as heroic.

Nah. I think Larry will wind up behind bars.

(The final 10-episode season of "Curb" airs Sunday nights on HBO. Episodes will debut at the same time weekly until the series finale on April 7. Episodes will also be available to stream on Max on their air dates).

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Peter Funt's latest book is "Playing POTUS: The Power of America's Acting Presidents," about comedians who impersonated presidents.



Tommy Emmanuel is 'in the happiness business'



"Music is spiritual and reaches us in ways words and actions can't. It's like what Billy Joel says in 'Piano Man' ... they come see me to forget about life for a while."

- Tommy Emmanuel

PHOTO AND COVER PHOTO / Simon Cecchetti

Grammy winning guitarist at the Cascade March 6

By Aaron Williams

If you're coming to see 2024 Grammy winner Tommy Emmanuel at the Cascade Theatre on March 6 be prepared. You never know what you're going to get.

Not only does the 68-year-old guitar virtuoso forgo a setlist for his solo performances, he comes to the stage with a read on the audience based on how hyped up they are after his opening acts.

"My biggest decision is always what do I want to start with?" Emmanuel said in a phone call with *After Five* from his Nashville home last month, a night after performing at the Grand 'Ole Opry. "When I come to Redding, Rob Ickes and Trey Hensley are opening and you better be on your game when you follow them."

A master of fingerstyle picking - playing baselines, chords, melodies and harmonies at the same time - Emmanuel told the story of playing to a full house after covid restrictions had been lifted. He said his opener finished with a Grateful Dead song with a long, drawn-out acoustic guitar solo.

"One of my dear friends comes into the dressing room during the song and says 'How are you going to follow that?'" Emmanuel recalled.

His response was to walk on stage and ease into "One Mint Julep" by the Clovers.

"It was a slow 'boom, boom, boom' groove," he said. "It was slow and sexy and the only way I could do it after the other artist hosed the crap out of the audience."

"(The start of the show) is thrilling for the audience, but even more so for me."

And with a catalog that stretches back to 1979, the setlist is nearly limitless for the Australian-born guitarist.

"I'm going to get out there and fly

"(Redding) is a great area and the Cascade is like a lot of those old great halls that are still in good shape or have been restored."

- Tommy Emmanuel

my kite," he said. "I'm always going to go out on a limb, because that's what's exciting for the audience. I never want to play it safe."

Emmanuel is no stranger to Redding, and says he loves coming to Northern California.

"I started coming to Redding a little later in my career, around the early 2000s, and I love coming up there," he said. "It's a great area and the Cascade is like a lot of those old great halls that are still in good shape or have been restored."

"Those are the places I enjoy playing - good seats, great lighting and an audience that is ready for a good time."

Tickets are available at cascadetheatre.org. The tour is proving to be extremely popular. As of the start of the 17-city tour on Feb. 20, the show was already sold out or nearly sold out in Bend, Grants Pass and Portland, Oregon; Tulsa, Oklahoma; Salt Lake City, Utah; Seattle, Washington; and Campbell, Bakersfield, Santa Barbara and Anaheim, California. Among the only cities on the tour with tickets remaining were Redding and Eureka.

Born in New South Wales, Australia in 1955, Emmanuel is widely recognized as one of the world's greatest guitar players. Self-taught, he and his brothers began playing when they were young. By the time he was 7, he was on the road playing gigs.

It was around then that he first heard

Chet Atkins, also known as "Mr. Guitar." It would change the arc of his life.

"We lived out in the sticks and had no TV, no video or music teachers," he said. "We would play and work it out."

"I heard Chet play and it was an awakening, an epiphany. I had never heard such a beautiful sound."

And while some dismissed Atkins' picking as a studio trick, Emmanuel said he was convinced it was the real deal.

"He was so in tune, so in time and the arrangement was original ... I could tell he was playing everything at once," he said. "In spite of people saying it was a recording trick, I knew it was real and had to figure out how to do it."

Emmanuel, still a little boy, wrote to Atkins in Nashville and got a "big brown envelope two months later with a photo." He said the two began corresponding regularly through the mail in a time long before cell phones and the internet.

"When I was around 18 some friends recorded me and sent it to Chet without telling me," he remembered. "A note came a short while later in the mail with his phone number and a message 'If you can get to Nashville, I want to meet you.'"

Emmanuel said he finally did so, but it took seven years to get there.

"Coming to America fed my inspiration and need to get better," he said. "I've been really lucky that I've never had a real job my entire life."

Years later, Emmanuel would find himself on stage last month accepting a Grammy, his first in three nominations, for work he did with The String Revolution on "Folsom Prison Blues."

Asked if he was interested in "laying down a few licks" on the song, he said he was thrilled to head to Cash Cabin Studios for the session and to be able to meet Johnny Cash's grandsons as well

as John Carter Cash.

"I learned the arrangement and did it in two takes," he said. "They finished the track and had it mixed and it sounded great. I didn't think more of it until I got a call saying it had been nominated."

"You just never know. It's what I love about music ... anything's possible if you show up."

And to ensure he's "right" when he shows up at his gigs, Emmanuel said he sticks close to a routine that's worked for him over the years.

He'll need it for the tour with Ickes and Hensley. They're set to perform what appears to be a very demanding schedule of 17 shows in just 20 days, including a stretch of 10 days in a row to finish off the tour from March 1-10.

"Depending on the schedule, we're usually living on a bus," he said. "We usually get in town early in the morning and while the crew sleeps in, I get up early and find a coffee shop and explore. That's my routine."

"I like to get enough rest and get ready so when I walk on stage I'm 100 percent."

He said it's what he owes his audience.

"I'm in the happiness business," he said. "Music is spiritual and reaches us in ways words and actions can't. It's like what Billy Joel says in 'Piano Man' ... they come see me to forget about life for a while."



Rob Ickes and Trey Hensley

Ickes and Hensley

"(Rob & Trey are an) acoustic firestorm..." - Vintage Guitar

From the duo's bio: Take a 15-time IBMA (International Bluegrass Music Association) Dobro Player of the Year and a Tennessee-born guitar prodigy who made his Grand Ole Opry debut at the age of 11, and you have Rob Ickes and Trey Hensley, a powerhouse acoustic duo that has electrified the acoustic music scene.

Ickes and Hensley meld together blues, bluegrass, country, rock and other string band music of all kinds to form a signature blend that defies restrictions of genre.

The North State's own Merle Haggard was a fan.

Following the duo's second album, *The Country Blues* in 2016, featuring a cover of Haggard's "I Won't Give Up My Train," the country music legend said: "I'm sure I don't make a true 'critic' since I'm already such a fan, but this album from Rob Ickes and Trey Hensley is a wonderful piece of work. And my songwriting side is truly overwhelmed. Thank you, thank you, thank you."

NEWS of the WEIRD

Researchers at Western Sydney University have revealed results of a study showing that frequent nose-pickers may have a higher probability of developing Alzheimer's disease.

WION-TV reported that the habit introduces germs into the nasal cavity that trigger the brain to produce beta-amyloid as a defense.

An abundance of beta-amyloid is believed to be the leading cause of Alzheimer's.

"It is essential to note that the temporary relief obtained from nose-picking is not a substitute for proper nasal hygiene," the report said – "proper nasal hygiene" being "regular cleaning and maintenance of the nasal passages through gentle methods such as saline nasal rinses or blowing the nose."

■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■
Paul Gibbons, 63, of Kingsclere, England, paid about \$32,000 to have his kitchen remodeled a year ago, the Basingstoke Gazette reported.

Wickes, the company he chose to do the work, bungled it, according to Gibbons: "The finish throughout is so poor, and half the kitchen doesn't fit as it should. I agreed to the contract and what I was told would be two weeks of work, and ... I am left with a kitchen which I can't even use as you should."

As a result, Gibbons demanded a refund, but when he couldn't get that, he parked a decommissioned 1963 gun tank that he had borrowed from a friend outside the store.

Wickes called that "unacceptable and aggressive behavior" and threatened to have the tank removed.

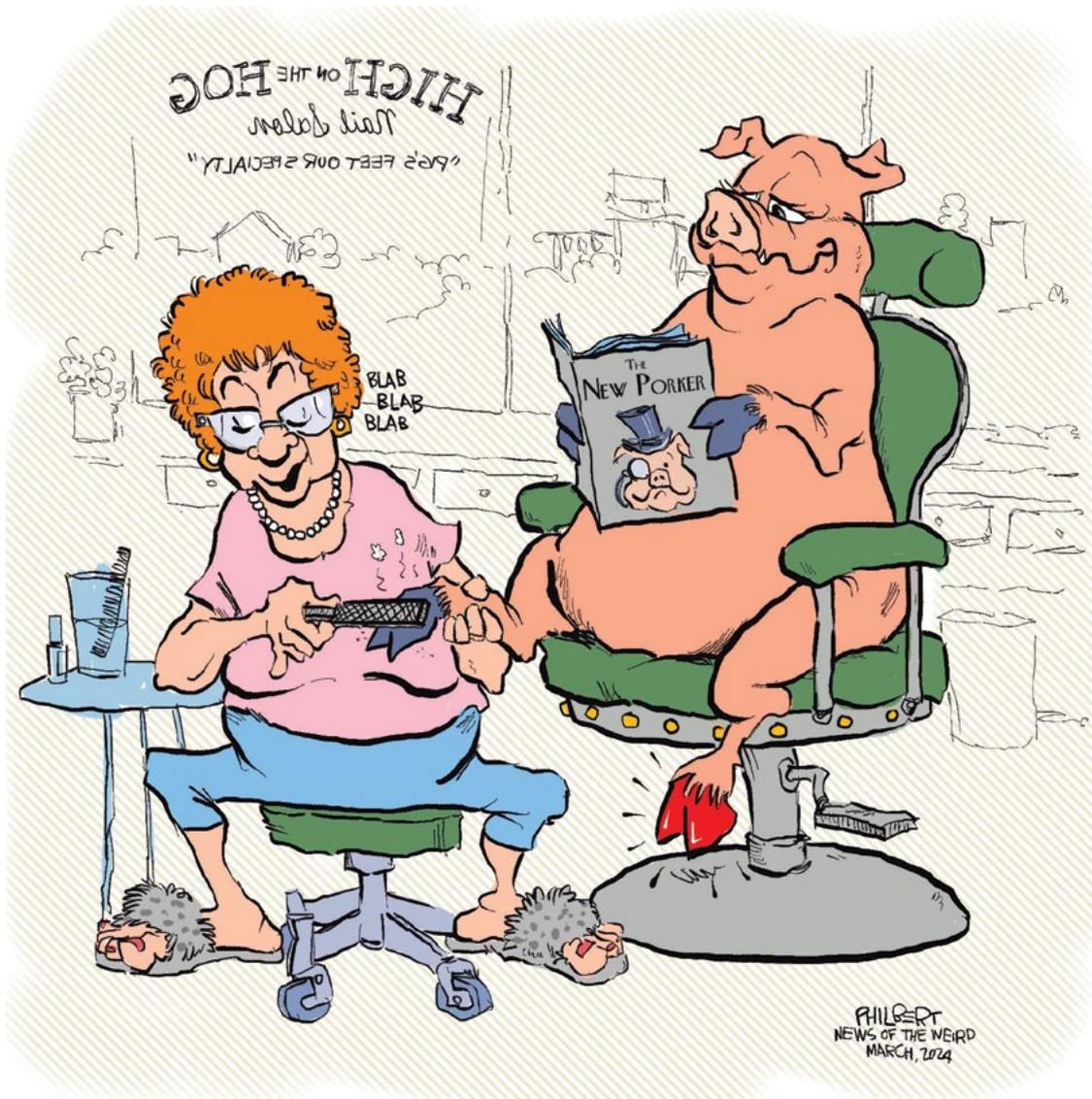
But Gibbons isn't budging: "I want my money back and want them to take that kitchen out of my house so I can get a new one."

■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■
After 2-1/2 years, Jackie Nguyen of Seattle "just didn't like" her couch anymore, USA Today reported.

After checking with Costco's return policy, Nguyen returned the couch to the store for a full refund.

"We just didn't like the color anymore," she admitted on a TikTok video. Nguyen didn't even have a receipt – but she did have a good memory and could tell the clerk the date she bought the sofa.

The clerk looked it up and refunded \$900 to her card. Costco told Nguyen that returned items are donated, resold, returned to the



When Carole Germain, 46, of Brest, France, adopted a pig in 2020, she didn't foresee that Couscous would lead her to a new business venture: pig pedicurist. Yahoo! News reported that Germain, who runs a bar in Brest, has started traveling all over France to trim the tusks and hooves of porcine pets. In fact, she's selling the bar to devote herself full-time to the practice. "It's nuts. I thought I was the only person who had one hogging the couch. But there are thousands," she said. On one trip around the south of France, she treated 43 pigs.

manufacturer for a credit or refurbished.

■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■
As an Amish couple from Shipshewana, Indiana, shopped at a Walmart in Sturgis, Michigan, Lona Latoski, 31, allegedly climbed inside their buggy and directed their horse away from the parking lot, MLive.com reported.

A witness saw the woman drive off and thought it was odd that she wasn't Amish, but didn't report the theft.

When the couple came out and realized their ride was gone, a truck driver offered them shelter from the cold and alerted police, who tracked down the buggy at an Admiral gas station, where it was parked.

Latoski was located in the

motel next door, hiding under a pile of clothing in a shower. She admitted taking the horse and buggy and said she had "instant regret ... but she was cold and needed to get home," the officer said.

"I asked her if she had ever had any training with equestrians," he said. "She did not know what 'equestrian' meant." Latoski was charged with larceny of livestock and general larceny.

■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■
Being naked in public in Florida is right on the cusp of being No Longer Weird.

Martin Evtimov, 36, parked his car on the sidewalk at Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport and climbed out without a stitch of clothing on, the New York Post

reported.

He entered Terminal 1 and approached the TSA security line as he spoke incoherently, then wandered toward the baggage inspection area.

That's where Broward County sheriff's deputies and TSA officers caught up with him. Evtimov resisted arrest but was eventually subdued. A judge later banned him from the airport and ordered a mental health screening.

■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■
Jason Clampit, 43, was arrested after it came to the attention of the FBI that he might be manufacturing the poison ricin on his property in Winslow, Arkansas.

KNWA-TV reported that an anonymous caller told the Washington County Sheriff's

Office that Clampit might have poisoned his mother with ricin, and when his property was searched, officers found castor beans (the source of ricin) and a jar of suspected liquid ricin.

According to text messages included in the affidavit, Clampit told his sister that he "made it to get people to stay out of our woods. There's a group of thieves out here called the Owlars. They snoop around watching people at night. They dress in gilly suits and hide in the bushes. So I made this stuff and I set up traps in the woods." He was held on a \$500,000 bond.

■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■
On Feb. 1, the lights went out in central Toronto, darkening traffic signals and trapping people in elevators, Reuters reported.

Crews who investigated found it was a roguish raccoon who made contact with equipment at the city's Hydro One electric station. (The raccoon did not survive, a spokesperson said.)

About 7,000 were affected for about three hours, Hydro One reported. While raccoon-caused outages are not unheard of, squirrels are the more common culprits.

■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■
Florida man Jason Brzuszkiewicz, 49, laughed his way through an incident in New Smyrna Beach, the New York Post reported.

Around 9 a.m., Brzuszkiewicz allegedly drove his pickup around a "Do Not Enter" sign at the beach and straight into the ocean as beachgoers looked on and recorded video.

When deputies questioned him about his antics, Brzuszkiewicz said, "It's not my fault the truck don't surf!"

He also claimed he thought he was in England. Brzuszkiewicz's only charge was for failing to pay the access fee to the beach; his truck was towed away.

■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■
Police in Calgary, Canada, caught up with "Alex Lee," whom they had been tracking since Christmas Eve.

The Calgary Herald reported that Lee, whose real name is Seyyed Amir Razavi, was charged with drug trafficking in connection with an unusual scheme: The 30-year-old handed out business cards with "free samples" of cocaine stapled to them at a local casino in an effort to boost his sales.

At a search of Razavi's home, police found almost 60 grams of cocaine, a digital

–Please See Page 13

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By Douglas McGrath
Book by Gerry Goffin & Carole King, Lyrics by Gerry Goffin & Carole King, Music by Carole King & Gerry Goffin
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You've got a Friend

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FIVE WOMEN WEARING THE SAME DRESS

WRITTEN BY ALAN BALL



Jan Dalziel Amanda Marsh Erin Sullivan Malorie Glavan Samantha Martens Samantha Robinson

DIRECTED BY ERIN HANEY STUART

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AFTER FIVE PHOTO

Cast members, left to right, back row: Samantha Robinson, Erin Sullivan and Samantha Martens. Front row: Amanda Marsh and Malorie Glavan.

Riverfront presents the Alan Ball play 'Five Women Wearing the Same Dress'

The man who won the Academy Award for Best Original Screenplay for *American Beauty* and who created the HBO series *Six Feet Under* and *True Blood*, is the playwright for the latest Riverfront Playhouse production.

Five Women Wearing the Same Dress was one of the first things Alan Ball wrote professionally in 1993.

Erin Haney Stuart, who is directing or co-directing her third play since Riverfront moved into their new theater, said she was looking for a comedy when filling a spot in the schedule.

"After reading about 12 scripts, I picked this one," Stuart said in an email. "Southern women being irreverent and honest usually appeals to an audience."

Five Women Wearing the Same Dress runs weekends March 8-24 with a special preview on Thursday, March 7. Friday and Saturday shows start at 7:30 p.m. with Sunday matinees scheduled at 2 p.m. The play contains explicit language and may not be suitable for everyone. Tickets are available online at riverfrontplayhouse.net or at Enjoy the Store in Redding.

The story revolves around five bridesmaids who, for different reasons, are avoiding the wedding reception. It takes place at the home of the bride and the bride's younger sister's room is where they all end up. The bride, Tracy Marlowe-McClure, is never seen in the play but has been significant in the lives of the bridesmaids - and not in a good way.

"The bride never appears but she's influenced the lives of all the women, sometimes tragically," Stuart said. "I guess I should mention here what a comedy is in theatrical terms. What makes a play a comedy besides the laughs is the ending. A well-written comedy deals with real life and that includes underlying pain, anger, regret, etc. At the heart of any play is conflict and there are many in this production."

The five bridesmaids in the production, as described in the Wikipedia entry for the play, and those portraying them are:

Amanda Marsh, most recently seen in Riverfront's Christmas play, who takes on the roll of Meredith Marlowe. She's the bride's rebellious, pot-smoking younger sister who is sarcastic and annoyed with the whole fiasco downstairs.

Frances, the naive and religious cousin

of the bride, is portrayed by Samantha Robinson. She was in the recent Riverfront Playhouse production of *Jekyll and Hyde* and last year played Izzy in *Rabbit Hole*.

Malorie Galvan is Georgeanne Darby, Tracy's "ugly sidekick" in high school and college, who has accepted the invitation to be a bridesmaid even though her relationship with Tracy is strained. Among other rolls last season, Galvan played a math genius (*Proof*) and a grieving mother (*Rabbit Hole*).

"She also played Frances in a local production of *Five Women* 12 years ago," Stuart said.

Trisha, portrayed by Erin Sullivan, is one of Tracy's former friends with a supposed bad reputation. Sullivan was last seen in Axiom Repertory Theatre's production of *Sylvia*, where she starred as the dog, Sylvia.

And Samantha Martens portrays Mindy McClure, the groom's clumsy and outspoken lesbian sister. Martens has directed several local plays including *Proof* and *Rabbit Hole*.

"And she was also the director of *Five Women* 12 years ago," Stuart said.

The one male character in the play - or at least the only one seen in the play - is Tripp Davenport (Griffen Lyle Davenport the Third), an usher who falls for Trisha. Ian Dalziel, who has played many characters on the Riverfront stage, including a charming con-man in *The Rainmaker*, portrays Tripp.

Like the bride, two additional characters who are unseen figure in the play.

Tommy Valentine is a guest at the wedding and is Tracy's former fiance. A high school heartbreaker, he has hit on or slept with all of her bridesmaids and many other unsuspecting women. He leaves the wedding reception with a woman in a backless dress. And Scott McClure, the groom, seems to be a hapless adornment to Tracy's big day.

Stuart said she's having the director's dream experience with this production.

"All of the actors are experienced and committed," she said. "It's not always like that, believe me. Also, I have a hard-working and experienced production crew. Again, not typical. It's really fun to watch this creative group as they make suggestions, help with tech, research the era, and support each other and the production."



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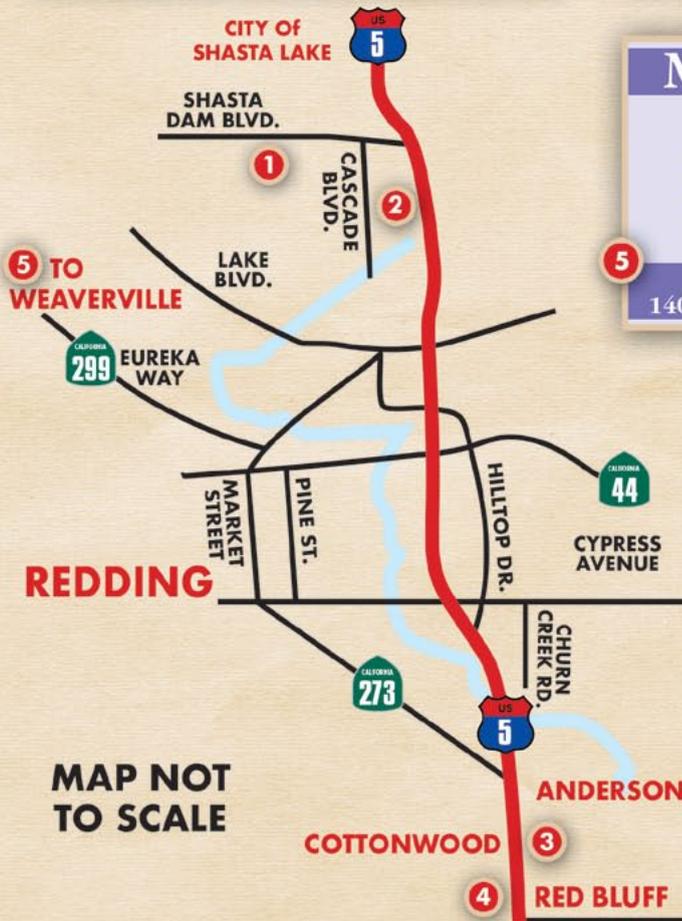
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MAP NOT TO SCALE

NEWS of the WEIRD

-From Page 8

scale, cash and "Alex Lee" business cards.

What is it about Disney World that provokes violence from park visitors?

Det. Duane Danforth, 38, of the Brookline, Massachusetts, police department is now on paid administrative leave after he allegedly assaulted security staffers and cast members at Epcot theme park, WHDH-TV reported.

Police reports say Danforth tried to access an off-limits area and said "I'm going to (expletive) kill you" while pushing a cast member away.

Danforth was the 2021 Officer of the Year in Brookline, recognized for his ability to deescalate situations. He will remain on leave until an internal investigation is complete.

In 1899 in Peshawar, Pakistan, James Squid, a drunken British officer, arrested a ... tree because he thought it was a fugitive trying to get away from him.

He ordered the tree chained to the ground, Oddity Central reported, and the chains have remained for 125 years, along with a plaque explaining them.

While tourists are tickled by the strange restraints, locals see the chains as a symbol of British oppression.

"Through this act, the British basically implied to the tribesmen that if they dared act against the Raj, they too would be punished in a similar fashion," one local man said. Others call it a living history.

Cynthia Kelly, 18, of Hillsborough County, Florida, has sued The Hershey Co. for \$5 million because the Reese's Peanut Butter Pumpkins she bought in October didn't have a jack-o'-lantern face on them as shown on the packaging.

ClickOrlando reported on Dec. 29 that Kelly accused the company of "false and deceptive advertising," and she "would not have purchased the Reese's Peanut Butter Pumpkins product if she knew that it did not have the detailed carvings of the mouth

and/or eyes as pictured on the product label," the suit reads.

She also pointed out that the White Ghost and Football candies were missing their own key details. One reviewer called the pumpkin a "monstrosity."

Two years ago, Paul Kerouac stopped at a Dunkin' Donuts in Winter Park, Florida, where he used the restroom, the New York Post reported.

While he was indisposed, the toilet he was occupying exploded, leaving him "covered with debris, including human feces and urine," according to a lawsuit filed on Jan. 3 in Florida's 9th Judicial District.

Kerouac claims the Dunkin' workers knew there was a "problem with the toilet" and says he now "requires mental health care and counseling as a direct result of the trauma he experienced in the restroom."

Authorities are still fishing for a man who entered a Bass Pro Shops store in Fort Myers, Florida, on Dec. 20 and dipped a net into the indoor fishpond, capturing a 50-pound tarpon.

USA Today reported that the suspect left the store with the dripping catch, and despite a cash reward and social media posts, the Lee County Sheriff's Office has not been able to identify or find him.

Authorities were called to the Leeds, Alabama, Bass Pro Shops on Jan. 4 after 42-year-old George Owens of Sterrett drove a car into a pole in the parking lot, then exited the car, stripped off all his clothes and ran inside, where he did a cannonball into the aquarium.

AL.com reported that Owens yelled at two police officers, then climbed over the edge of the aquarium, where he fell to the concrete floor and knocked himself out. He was charged with public lewdness among other offenses.

As a family in Arlington, Virginia, sat down to dinner, a Ring doorbell notification alerted them to someone at the door, WUSA-TV reported.

The woman told her husband,

"There's this guy, he didn't ring the doorbell. He's just standing there and he's in a gingerbread man costume."

The husband called the police non-emergency line to report the creepy visit, and about an hour later, another neighbor, Lindsey Churchill, spotted the gingerbread man.

"All of a sudden my dogs were going crazy ... and there was a giant blowup gingerbread man costume out on the sidewalk," she said.

"We kind of locked eyes and the gingerbread man went on his way. It was not holly jolly." Police never actually caught up with the subject, who was not identified.

Three armed suspects were busy robbing a check-cashing business in Commerce City, Colorado, when another thief mucked up their getaway plans, 9News-TV reported.

The robbers' vehicle, which was probably stolen, was outside when a woman jumped in and took off with it, leaving the teenage suspects to try to escape on foot.

Police were able to capture two of them, along with loaded firearms, and arrest them. The car thief is still at large.

In Wheat Ridge, Colorado, police caught up with a burglar who had hired an Uber for use as a getaway car, 14News-TV reported.

Jose Guadalupe Perez-Gallardo was taken into custody as he approached his hired ride, carrying a backpack with \$8,600 worth of stolen Milwaukee-brand tools inside.

"Ordering an Uber as your getaway driver makes it that much easier for us to find you," the Wheat Ridge Police Department posted online.

Dr. Kevin Mollrem of Eden Prairie, Minnesota, is the subject of a malpractice lawsuit filed by his patient Kathleen Wilson, USA Today reported.

Wilson alleges in the suit that Mollrem, during a single visit in July 2020, performed more than 30 procedures on Wilson's mouth – eight crowns, four root canals and 20 fillings – and that the work was done "improperly," resulting in her disfiguration.

The lawsuit also alleges that

Mollrem used twice the amount of anesthesia allowed and then falsified records to cover that dosage. Wilson is seeking more than \$50,000 in damages.

Vancouver, British Columbia, police revealed that a 72-year-old woman successfully chased an intruder from her home with a shovel, Vancouver City News reported.

A naked man broke into the victim's home with a pointed metal rod, which he swung toward her throughout the encounter.

She fought back with a shovel, and "chased him out of the house and cornered him until officers arrived," police said.

"Kudos to her, it was pretty badass of her, I would say," said Constable Tania Visintin. No one was injured during the incident.

We've all seen the restaurant notices about automatic gratuities added for parties of more than six or eight people.

A 10-person group in South Bend, Indiana, thought they would beat the system at the Wild Crab restaurant by splitting into two groups of five, WSBT-TV reported.

A manager said the group was informed that they'd be subject to the 18% gratuity, even though they were seated in different sections of the restaurant.

As the party left the restaurant, someone threw crayons at the manager and pepper-sprayed them. Firefighters responded to help the victim of the pepper spray, and a police report was filed.

Someone missed the "Please secure all loose clothing" safety message.

On the DC Rivals HyperCoaster at Movie World in Oxenford, Australia, the Mirror reported that a scarf became entangled around the wheel of one of the trains, which caused it to stop at the top of a hill.

Dozens of riders were stranded, and each was given a harness and told to walk down the stairs to the load station.

"All the guests on-board are safe with the ride vehicle stopped in a designated zone," Warner Bros. Movie World said in a statement.

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Cascade's 'The Lightning Thief' targets younger audiences

The Lightning Thief: The Percy Jackson Musical, based on the 2005 novel of the same name by Rick Riordan, is the Cascade Theatre's spring musical production for eight scheduled shows from March 21-30.

"When I got the green light to add spring musicals back onto the Cascade calendar, I knew that I had to have John Truitt as my partner (and director) in musical theatre crime," Tara Faires, producer of the show said in an email. "I also knew it would have to be a musical that hadn't been done before in Redding. Coming off of *Matilda*, the last spring musical, I loved the ties between book and show and saw what those two things tied together could do to bring younger audiences to the Cascade.

"I researched *The Lightning Thief* and some other musicals to pitch to John last year and he responded immediately: This one," Faires said. "I knew going into the musical that it would be perfect for the tweens. Based on the Rick Riordan books and now a hit TV show on Disney+ the timing couldn't have been better."

In the story, as the half-blood son of a Greek god, Percy Jackson has newly discovered powers he can't control, a destiny he doesn't want, and a mythology textbook's worth of monsters on his trail, said Faires.

When Zeus's master lightning bolt is stolen and Percy becomes the prime suspect, he has to find and return the bolt to prove his innocence and prevent a war between the gods. But to succeed in his quest, Percy will have to do more than catch the thief. He must travel to the Underworld and back; solve the riddle of the Oracle, which warns him of betrayal by a friend; and come to terms with the father who abandoned him.

Percy is being played by Malakai Langenberg in his first lead role, Faires said. However, he has graced the Cascade



PHOTO / Michael Burke

Cast members of the Cascade Theatre musical *The Lightning Thief*, left to right: Blake Fisher, Henry Patterson, Breanna Hagen (as Annabeth), Malakai Langenberg (as Percy) and Finn Hansen.

stage before in *Cascade Christmas* (2022 and 2023) Bruce in *Matilda*, part of the ensemble in *Little Mermaid* at Axiom, and multiple shows with the Redding Theatre Company.

Langenberg said he can relate to his character, Percy.

"Sometimes it's hard to fit in," he said. "Being a theatre kid isn't always considered being normal. Plus, this is the biggest role I have had so far and it's helping me grow and stretching me as an actor."

Faires said they "have tons of familiar faces" in the production.

"There's Blake Fisher, (*Elf*, *Mamma Mia*) Henry Patterson (*Sound of Music*) and Jessica Cox (*Cinderella*, *Matilda*) to name a few," she said, "but also quite a few new faces who will blow you away with their talent and commitment."

Faires said Breanna Hagen, who is new

to the Cascade family and plays Annabeth, the female leading role, has mostly done shows with Redding Performing Arts Center.

"I discovered this show a couple of years ago and absolutely fell in love with it, its music, its humor, its story, and especially the character of Annabeth," Hagen said. "When I heard it was coming to Redding, I got so excited and knew I had to be a part of it, no matter what role I played. Getting the chance to play Annabeth is just the cherry on top of the amazing cake that is *The Lightning Thief*."

Faires said this isn't a typical song and dance musical.

"It's dark and funny and feels almost like a concert you never want to end," she said. "The songs are catchy and the storyline follows the books but with some fun twists and turns."

"My hope with this musical is to change up the demographic of theatre goers and bring in a new wave to the Cascade. We've already sold out our two school shows which means over 1,800 kids will be able to see the magic."

This will also be Faires' final show at the Cascade.

"I've been working at the Cascade since I moved to Redding in 2017," Faires said. "I started off as a house manager, then became the volunteer coordinator, then was cast in *Mamma Mia* (ensemble), then got roped into being a production manager for *Elf*, *Matilda*, and what would have been our summer musical, *Wedding Singer*."

Then covid hit. As that wound down, she said she then got asked to become more of an artistic director and producer.

"I've done two original *Cascade Christmas* shows and an epic fundraiser, *ENCORE!*," she said. "What better way to go out than an amazing rock musical."

"These shows have been back-to-back for three years straight, and I'm ready to take a little break and see what else is out there. I'm not moving, just ready to take some time for my family and lend my artistic directing and producer skills to other avenues in Redding. You will still find me whooping and hollering from the audience, even if I'm not involved in the show."

In addition to Truitt and Faires, others on the production side of *The Lightning Thief* are musical direction by Katie Narf, choreography by Bobby Milhouse, costumes by Amanda Hazeleur and Debbie Goodman, and set, prop and painting by Erika Warmington.

"And we're also partnering with Karlo Henry Velazquez of the Art Hunger who is making all our Greek monster creatures," Faires said.

For tickets and more information including show times, go online to cascadetheatre.org or call 530.243.8877.

The songs of Goffin/King and Mann/Weil featured in 'Beautiful: The Carole King Musical' at Axiom

Before *Tapestry* was released in 1971 and became one of the biggest selling albums of all time, Carole King was a major songwriter during nearly all of the 1960s for a number of other artists, usually in collaboration with her partner and husband, lyricist Gerry Goffin.

Just a smattering of their songs includes: "Some Kind of Wonderful" (The Drifters); "Will You Love Me Tomorrow" (The Shirelles and many others); "Take Good Care of My Baby" (Bobby Vee); "The Loco-Motion" (Little Eva and later Grand Funk Railroad); "Chains" (The Cookies and The Beatles); "Go Away Little Girl" (most famously by Donny Osmond); "Up on the Roof" (The Drifters, James Taylor and others); "One Fine Day" (The Chiffons); "Don't Bring Me Down," (The Animals); "Just Once in My Life" (The Righteous Brothers); "I'm Into Something Good" (Hermans Hermits); "You Make Me Feel Like a Natural Woman" (Aretha Franklin); and several of the Monkees best songs including "Pleasant Valley Sunday," "Star Collector," "Sweet Young Thing," "Porpoise Song," "Sometime in the Morning," and "As We Go Along."

And that's all before King broke out from behind the scenes in the early 1970s to begin writing, singing and performing her own songs after splitting from Goffin.

That build up to *Tapestry*, including her



PHOTO / Kim Mobely

Lizzie Stoxen portrays Carol King in *Beautiful*.

relationship with her mother, her personal and professional relationship with Goffin, and a friendly rivalry with fellow 1960s songwriting couple Barry Mann and Cynthia Weil, is the basic premise of the jukebox musical, *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical*, Axiom Repertory Company's March production.

Tapestry, which has sold some 30 million records, won four Grammys and was rated by Rolling Stone Magazine as the 25th greatest album of all time, is practically a greatest hits compilation on its own. The album features such classic

songs as "So Far Away," (which begins the *Beautiful* musical), and "I Feel The Earth Move" (which closes it), along with "It's Too Late," "Beautiful," "You've Got a Friend," and King's versions of her own songs, "Will You Love Me Tomorrow," and "You Make Me Feel Like a Natural Woman."

"This show has been one I've wanted to perform for a long time," Lizzie Stoxen, who portrays Carole King in the Axiom production, said in an email. "I love jukebox musicals but often feel they are a bit disjointed, whereas the story of Carole King is told here with her own songs and words, and therefore very articulately tells an emotional story that the audience will be able to follow and connect with."

Before she was hit-maker Carole King, she was Carole Klein, a spunky, young songwriter from Brooklyn with a unique voice. From the chart-topping hits she wrote for the biggest acts in music to her own life-changing, trailblazing success with *Tapestry*, *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical* takes you back to where it all began.

Beautiful is based on a book by the late Oscar- and Tony-nominated Douglas McGrath and features the music and lyrics of King, Goffin, Mann and Weil.

Weil (who passed away in 2023) and Mann were a major songwriting team themselves, writing such well known songs

that are in *Beautiful* as "On Broadway," "You've Lost That Lovin' Feeling," "Walking in the Rain," "We Gotta Get Out of This Place," and "Uptown."

"It has been a challenge to work on becoming a character who is real," Stoxen said. "Making acting decisions based on historical accuracy versus artistic interpretation has been a tough process, but I'm loving the exploratory journey of it all. The cast and staff are a dream, and I couldn't be more excited."

Others in the musical include: Leah Schager as Carole's mother, Genie Klein; Thom Hanson as famed music producer Don Kirshner; Mark Amacker as Gerry Goffin; Satie Scheafer as Cynthia Weil; Dennis Leale as Barry Mann; Gabe Newman as singer, songwriter and pianist Neil Sedaka; and Cole Cassell as *Tapestry* producer Lou Adler.

Also in the cast are Melodie Padilla, Aronnest Grayson, Alondra Perales-Aguilar, Cole Cassell, Chrissy Haines and Monica Brown, along with 10 additional performers who make up the ensemble.

Beautiful: The Carole King Musical, is scheduled for performances Thursdays through Sundays, March 8-24. Thursday, Friday and Saturday shows are slated for 7:30 p.m. with Sunday matinees at 2 p.m. Tickets and more information are available at axreptheatre.com or call 530.605.0500.

Who should be screened for lung cancer?

Dear Savvy Senior,
Who should be screened for lung cancer and how is it covered by Medicare? I used to smoke but quit many years ago and am wondering if I need to be tested.

- Just Turned 65



By Jim Miller

Dear Just Turned,
Even if you haven't touched a cigarette in decades, you could still be due for an annual lung cancer screening, based on new recommendations from the American Cancer Society (ACS).

The new guidelines state that adults ages 50 to 80 who currently smoke or used to smoke the equivalent of one pack a day for 20 years should get an annual low-dose computed tomography scan (also called a CT scan), no matter how long ago you quit.

ACS guidelines previously said that those who quit 15 or more years ago were in the clear. But new studies have shown that expanding screening eligibility saves lives, even among people who quit smoking years earlier.

Early Detection Saves Lives

Lung cancer is the deadliest cancer in the United States. According to the American Cancer Society, an estimated 234,580 new cases are

expected to be diagnosed in 2024, and about 125,070 Americans will die from the disease.

While lung cancer can occur in anyone at any age, cigarette smoking is the top risk factor and is linked to about 80 to 90 percent of lung cancer deaths, and most people diagnosed with the disease are age 65 or older.

What makes lung cancer especially tricky is that it's often symptomless until it's at an advanced stage, when it's harder to treat. Early detection can lead to a 20 to 25 percent improvement in survival rates, resulting in fewer deaths from lung cancer.

But a 2022 report from the American Lung Association found that only 5.8 percent of people eligible for lung cancer screening in the U.S. get screened, and the screening rate is as

low as 1 percent in some states.

Screening and Coverage

If you fall into the population eligible for a lung cancer screening, start by speaking with your doctor, even if it's been a long time since you smoked.

Medicare Part B will cover lung cancer screenings with a low-dose CT scan once a year for people ages 50 to 77 who are current smokers or quit in the last 15 years and have a 20-pack-year history. Patients must have an order from their doctor or health care provider and should not have symptoms of lung cancer.

A low-dose CT scan is a noninvasive test where you lie down and hold your breath while being moved through a doughnut-shaped X-ray machine. The scan takes

several X-ray images of the lungs and can help to identify possible abnormalities in the lung tissue.

There are some potential risks with this screening, including the possibility of false positives, which can lead to more scans or invasive procedures.

According to the American Lung Association about 12 to 14 percent of lung cancer screening scans will have a false positive, which is about the same rate as with mammograms.

Send your senior questions to: Savvy Senior, P.O. Box 5443, Norman, OK 73070, or visit SavvySenior.org. Jim Miller is a contributor to the NBC Today show and author of "The Savvy Senior" book.

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