

AFTER FIVE

THE NORTH STATE MAGAZINE

MAY 2023 / 36th Year / No. 7

THE NEWS, ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT MONTHLY

ON THE COVER

LASSEN AWAKES!

The North State Symphony will close out the season this month in Redding and Chico with Masterworks 4: Rachmaninoff & Dvorak, featuring renowned pianist Charlie Albright (photo at right) and the world premiere of 'Lassen Awakes!' by composer and North State Symphony interim principal bassoonist Marko Bajzer. See page 2

STEAMPUNK & MORE

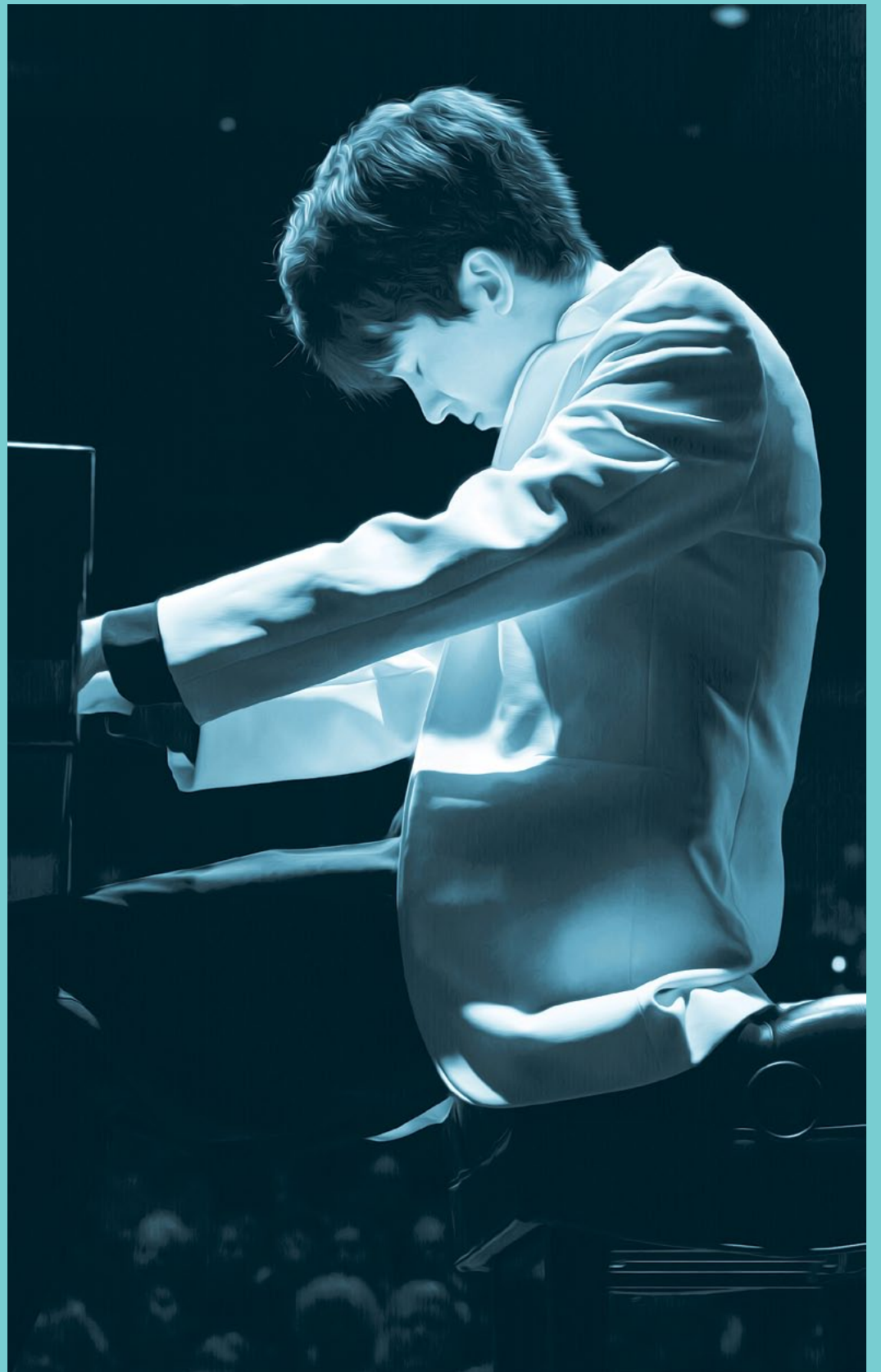
Events are happening all over the north state including the Steampunk Festival in Weed (photo at left), Boomtown Festival in Shasta Lake, Trinity Heritage Days in Weaverville, Spring Into Music Festival and Old Lewiston Peddlers Faire in Lewiston, Bigfoot BBQ in Hayfork, Strawberry Festival in Happy Valley and more. See inside for info on some of these events.



Festival in Happy Valley and more. See inside for info on some of these events.

RUTHLESS! RETURNS

The Axiom Repertory Theatre production of Ruthless! The Musical, which had its debut in the summer of 2022 only to be cut short after one of the actors was injured in an automobile accident, returns to the stage in May. See page 14



Season Finale



North State Symphony's final concert of the season includes renowned pianist Charlie Albright (above).

COVER PHOTO / T.C. Elofson PHOTO ABOVE / Jamie Kassa

NSS closes out season with noted pianist and premiere of 'Lassen Awakes!'

The North State Symphony (NSS) will close out their season in Redding and Chico with *Masterworks 4: Rachmaninoff & Dvorak*, featuring a renowned pianist and the world premiere of a piece by the NSS interim principal bassoonist.

The concerts are scheduled for Saturday, May 13, at 7:30 p.m., at the Cascade Theatre in Redding and Sunday, May 14, at 2 p.m., at Laxson Auditorium in Chico. A pre-concert talk is presented one hour before each performance by North State Symphony Music Director and Conductor Scott Seaton. For tickets and more information go online to northstatesymphony.org.

This final concert features the "virtuosic brilliance" of pianist Charlie Albright as they celebrate the 150th anniversary of Sergei Rachmaninoff's birth with his lush, romantic, emotionally-powerful *Piano Concerto No. 2*, Seaton said in an email.

"Charlie performed with the North State Symphony a few years ago during one of our New Year's Eve concerts in Redding and many won't have forgotten his brilliant and effortless playing of Gershwin's 'Rhapsody in Blue,'" the Symphony conductor said. "For someone to have such an international demand and to have performed with so many household

"(Marko Bajzer) wrote a piece that depicts the immense beauty and power that has been displayed at Lassen throughout its history. Yes, there are even the sounds of eruptions in the piece."

**- Scott Seaton
North State Symphony
Music Director**

names, such as Yo-Yo Ma, we are lucky to experience his technical mastery and passion here in the North State. I completely agree with the Washington Post in their review stating that Charlie is 'among the most gifted musicians of his generation.'"

Seaton said another key element of this concert is the world premiere of the piece "Lassen Awakes!" by composer Marko Bajzer, who is also serving as the North State Symphony interim principal bassoon.

"Marko is a national park enthusiast, and this past summer was named artist-in-residence for Lassen Volcanic National Park where he spent the month of June taking in the incredible scope of the park," Seaton said. "He

then wrote a piece that depicts the immense beauty and power that has been displayed at Lassen throughout its history.

"Yes, there are even the sounds of eruptions in the piece."

Seaton said it's a powerful work that evokes many sounds or feelings one would have walking around and experiencing the park firsthand.

"There are even recorded sounds from the volcano that are played back during the piece itself," Seaton said. "It's quite an experience."

The concert and the season end with what Seaton said is one of his favorite works by one of his favorite composers, Antonin Dvorak.

"His 'Symphony No. 8' is a brilliant ray of sunshine," the conductor said. "The piece is full of optimism and a bright, cheery exuberance, especially in the finale when the pace seems to get faster and faster right up to the conclusion of the work. With all the outbursts from within the orchestra, it's almost like experiencing a carnival for the first time and being consumed by the sounds, colors and childlike endless energy that will take us all the way to the thrilling conclusion."

Looking back as this season comes to a close, Seaton said they always try to bring a variety of music to North State audiences.



Marko Bajzer

"From Mariachi to Piazzolla, from Haydn to Rachmaninoff, we always strive to provide programming for everyone that reflects the incredible diversity of our community and the vastness of the world around us," he said. "Next season will continue on that trek, and we look forward to announcing an exciting array of programming in the coming weeks."

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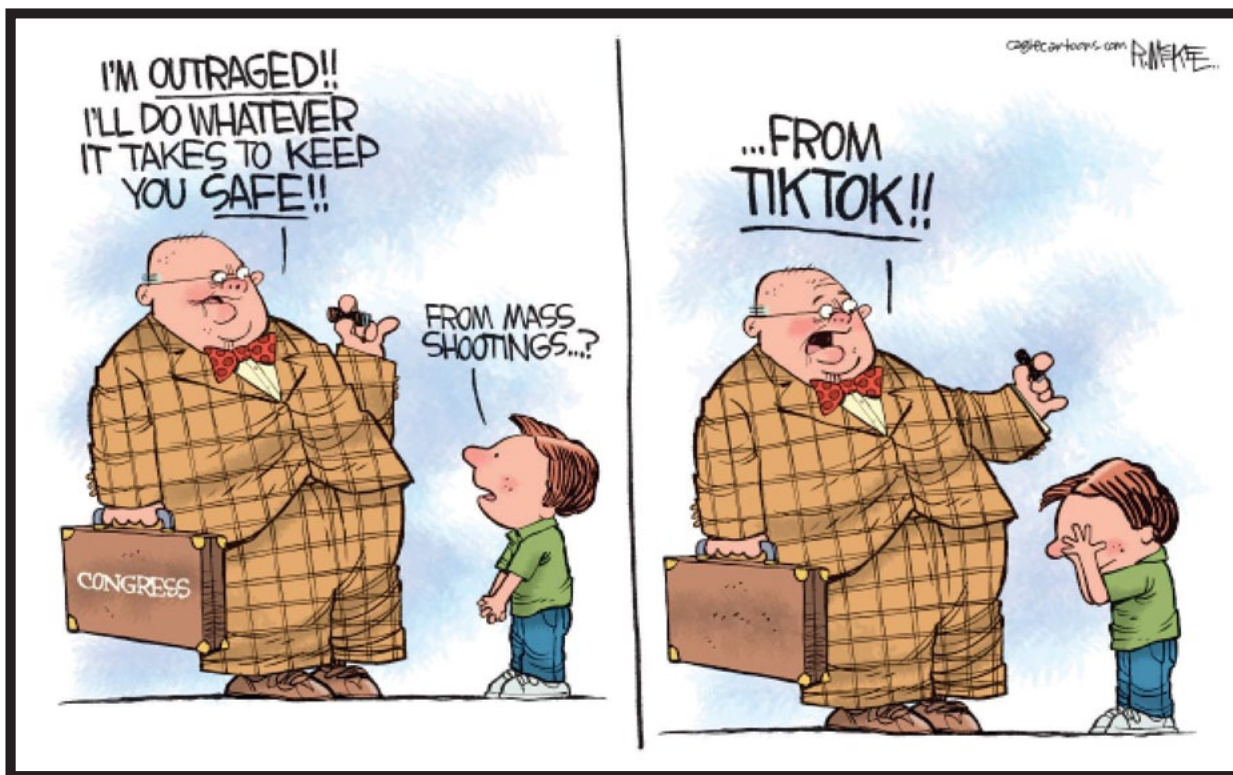
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PHOTOS / Weed Chamber of Commerce

Second Steampunk Festival scheduled May 20 in Weed

The Weed Chamber of Commerce promises there will be lots of fun for all ages on Main Street in historic downtown when the second Weed Steampunk Festival is held on Saturday, May 20, from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. The event is free to the public.



Costumes are encouraged with a competition for best dressed scheduled during the afternoon. Steampunk vendors and memorabilia will be on hand, along with a photo booth. You're also asked to bring your steampunk inventions to display.

Food and other vendor displays will be on hand as well, along with a great music lineup, the Chamber said.

For booth space, get all the forms online at weedchamber.com or visit the Weed Chamber of Commerce. For more information, call Richard at the chamber office at 530-938-4624.

AFTER FIVE The North State Magazine

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Advertising and editorial deadline for the June 2023 issue is Wednesday, May 17

No telephone call submissions; email or regular mail only.

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After Five is printed by the Klamath Falls Herald and News



Mother's Day Brunch

Sunday, May 14th

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Urgent calls from college

By Jase Graves



Having two of my semi-grown daughters in college simultaneously has truly been an adventurous journey for our family – the kind where you enjoy amazing new experiences, but your expensive designer luggage gets stolen and you have to request an extra air-sickness bag.

For the first few months of their college lives, our daughters called us regularly to discuss their activities and to tell us how much they missed us (or at least our pets). Now, on the rare occasions when they call/text, we know it means one of two things: 1) they need more money or 2) something is wrong (and they probably need more money to fix it).

Our most recent crisis-text involved our “happy-go-lucky-and-blow-\$300-on-another-pair-of-limited-edition-Nikes” middle daughter. At around 1:00 AM on a Friday night, my wife received an urgent text from an unknown number informing us that it was our daughter using a friend’s phone because she had lost her phone (again) and, therefore, could no longer function as a viable human being.

We replied to the text by informing her that our Life360 parental-stalking app showed her phone to be at a restaurant where her mother and I can’t afford to eat. (We didn’t ask why she was awake and out in the middle of the night because we naturally assumed she was attending a nocturnal Bible study.)

After not receiving any communication for next several hours and frantically imagining that she had been abducted by Russian Nike traffickers, we were relieved by a late-morning call from our daughter, who provided a rather vague and suspicious explanation of how she had found her phone and could now resume life as an actual person. (I’m pretty sure she also asked for more money.)

Other than a couple of the most expensive flat tires in the history of flat tires, a sophomore-college-student-proof pickle jar lid and a gymnastics accident in which she basically dislocated her entire body, our eldest and most expensive daughter has managed fairly well.

One of her more memorable requests for help was last semester when she called to inform us that she and her roommates had tried out her brand-new, state-of-the-art, top-of-the-line, high-end, gourmet air fryer, and it started smoking. I replied that she should tell the air fryer that smoking is addictive and bad for its health. (She didn’t laugh.)

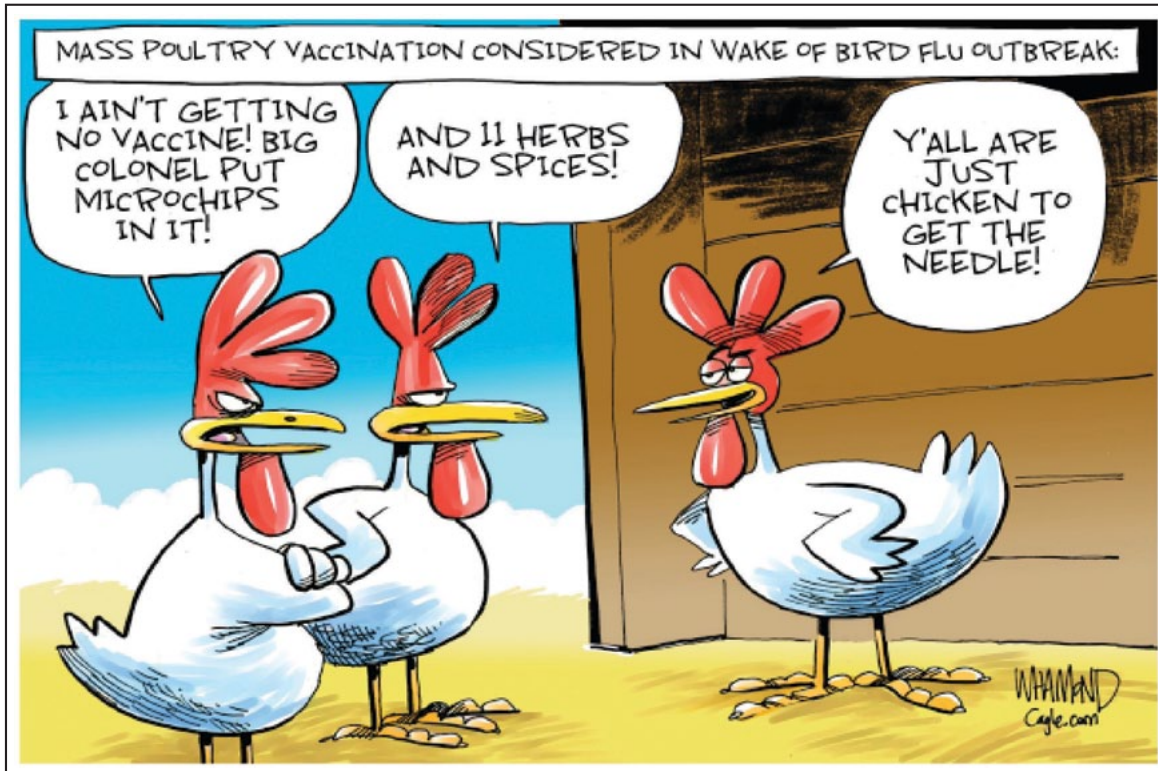
She said they eventually discovered that the source of the smoke was a freshly-baked cardboard packaging insert they had failed to remove from within the device before trying to use it. (I think I broke a rib laughing.)

She then asked if we thought the air fryer would be ok. I replied that if it quit smoking immediately, it could probably avoid heart disease and cancer. (I’m pretty sure she hung up at that point.)

Seriously, though, I realize that raising children to be independent adults should be one of a parent’s primary goals, but it’s still nice to be needed from time to time while they are on their college journey, even if it just involves a stubborn pickle jar lid – and more money.

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Graves is an award-winning humor columnist from East Texas. His columns have been featured in *Texas Escapes* magazine, *The Shreveport Times*, *The Longview News Journal*, and *The Kilgore News Herald*. Contact Graves at susanjase@sbcglobal.net





RUTHLESS!

THE STAGE MOTHER OF ALL MUSICALS RETURNS

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DIRECTED BY KEN HILL

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ThreeShastas.com

A 61-year-old butcher working at the Sheung Shui Slaughterhouse in Hong Kong died at the hands – er, hooves – of a pig he was trying to slaughter, CNN reported.

The unnamed man was knocked to the ground by the struggling pig, which had revived after a shot from a stun gun and suffered a wound from a meat cleaver.

Strangely, police said, the man's wounds were to his hand and foot; a cause of death had not been released. The Labour Department extended its "deepest sympathy to his family."

On Jan. 16, Brazilian attorney Leandro Mathias de Novaes delivered his mother to the Laboratoria Cura in Sao Paulo, where she was scheduled for an MRI.

Before they both entered the MRI room, the New York Post reported, they were asked to remove any metal objects from their persons and signed a form detailing the protocols, but Novaes opted to not remove, or disclose, his concealed weapon.

When the MRI's magnetic field yanked the pistol from his waistband, it fired and struck him in the stomach; he was hospitalized for three weeks after the incident but died on Feb. 6.

Marcelo "B-boy" De Souza Ribeiro of Sao Paulo, Brazil, is known as the most modified man in the world, with 1,500 tattoos covering his skin and now, a new transformation: a "devil hand."

The Daily Star reported that Ribeiro did a lot of research before undergoing the procedure, which split his hand between the middle and ring fingers.

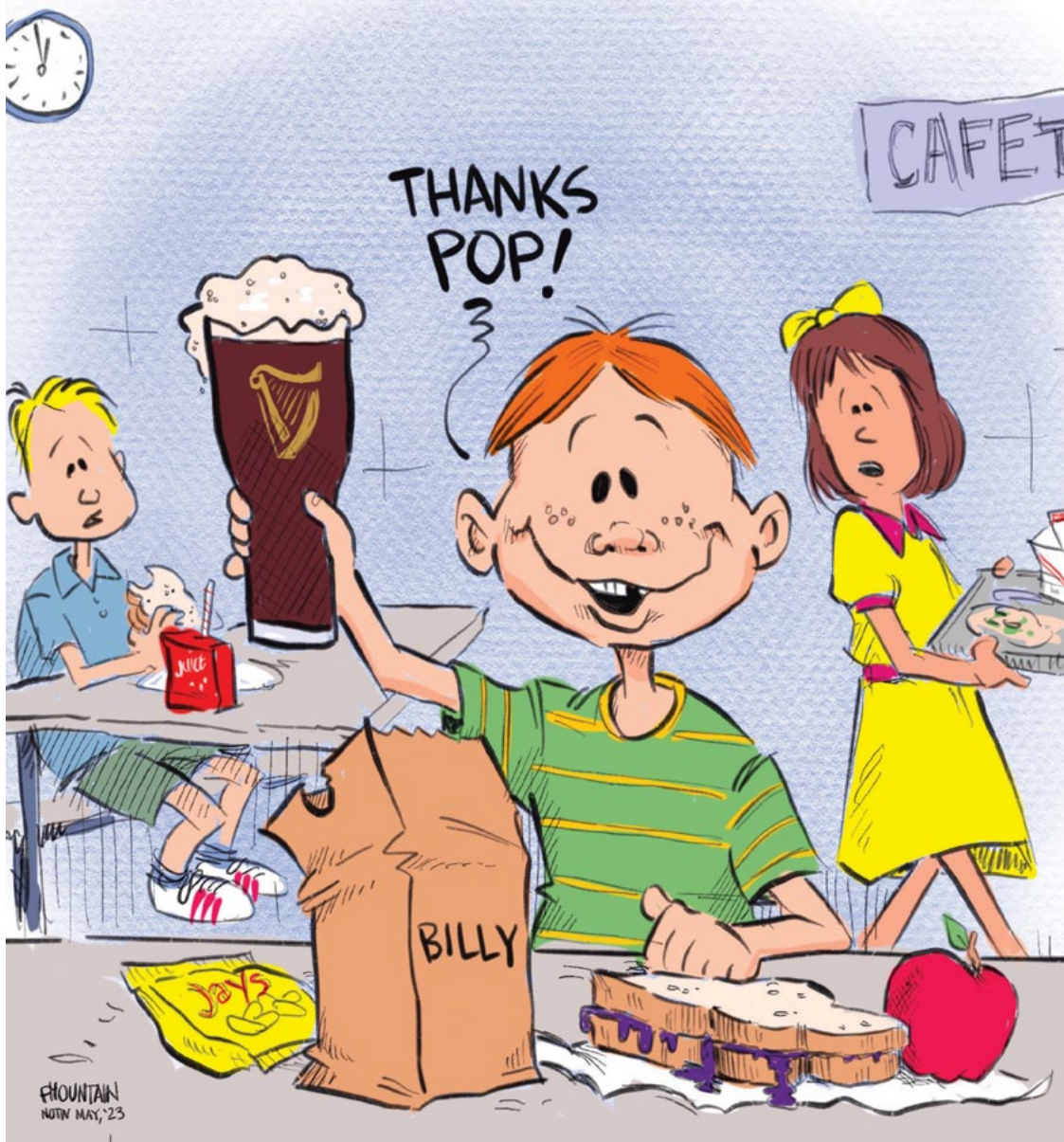
"I began to see the possibility of making an opening ... through the middle where you can have opening and closing movements and a firmer folding of the hand," he said.

Over the years, he's spent about \$35,000 on his modifications, which also include a split tongue. Ribeiro said he thinks of his body as an "art exhibition."

New York City Mayor Eric Adams named former schoolteacher Kathleen Corradi to a new position, United Press International reported.

Corradi is the rat czar (officially, director of rodent mitigation) of the Big Apple. Adams said it was "clear we needed someone solely focused on leading our rat

NEWS of the WEIRD



TikTokker Will Meyers posted in early April that he had to "go pick up my kid from school today because I made a big mistake," the Daily Mail reported. As Meyers packed his son's lunch that morning, he loaded in a can of Guinness – because the black can looks a lot like Liquid Death sparkling water. "It looks like sparkling water, but it's definitely not sparkling water," Meyers said. Other parents weighed in, with one admitting they sent "two packs of cigarettes in a bag of paper plates and napkins to my daughter's class." A teacher soothed the guilty parents, saying it's a common mistake.

reduction efforts across all five boroughs."

In 2022, rat sightings in the city increased by 74% over the previous year.

Requirements for the job included being "highly motivated and somewhat bloodthirsty" with a "swash-buckling attitude, crafty humor and general aura of badassery."

"I look forward to sending the rats packing," Corradi said.

Although he is no longer governor of California, Arnold Schwarzenegger still performs his civic duty – in this case, filling a huge pothole in his Brentwood neighborhood with concrete.

The Associated Press

reported that the Terminator himself, along with a helper, used a shovel and packaged concrete to fill a hole in the street.

"Today, after the whole neighborhood has been upset about this giant pothole that's been screwing up cars and bicycles for weeks, I went out with my team and fixed it," he tweeted.

"This is crazy. For three weeks I've been waiting for this hole to be closed."

Arnold's heroics may have been misguided, however, according to a statement from SoCalGas.

The "pot-hole" actually was an active work trench for a project to be completed in May.

Police in Boardman, Ohio, are still on the lookout for a robber who broke into a Bed Bath & Beyond store early on April 8, WFMJ-TV reported.

Surveillance cameras captured a "stocky male" throwing a rock through a window at the store, then heading to a stockroom in the back, where he filled four shopping carts with 33 Dyson vacuum cleaners.

The vacuums were valued at between \$500 and \$750 each, for a total loss of \$17,000.

Because there are no surveillance cameras outside the store, authorities didn't get a picture of the getaway vehicle.

In 2008, an enormous sinkhole appeared in Daisetta, Texas, NPR reported. At that time, it grew to a cavity about 900 feet across and 260 feet deep, then stabilized.

Over the years, it became a sort of recreational area, where people fished and alligators lazed. But on April 2, the hole began expanding.

"My neighbor came over and said he kept hearing popping sounds like a gunshot," said Tim Priessler. "We went to the backyard, and there were buildings falling in. It was like a movie. You can see cracks forming in the ground."

Since then, a vacant building and several storage tanks have sunk. The EPA and city officials are working to find out what has caused the sinkhole to shift, but as of April 10, no evacuation orders had been issued.

Seems like it would go without saying, but you might not want to assemble an item you just stole on the store's parking lot.

On April 3 in Flagler County, Florida, Patrick Vandermeiden-Miller allegedly walked out of a Target store with an electric scooter he had not paid for, WESH-TV reported. Deputies were called to the scene, where they found Vandermeiden-Miller near a cart rack, putting together the scooter.

He also had drug paraphernalia in his pockets. He was charged with possession of drug paraphernalia and petit theft.

Darryl Pitt, chair of the meteorite division at the Maine Mineral and Gem Museum in Bethel, has an offer Mainers won't want to refuse: If you're the first to find a big (the size of a softball or bigger) space rock from a recent meteorite crash, the museum will pay you \$25,000.

The fireball was seen in the sky around noon on April 8, and NASA reported that "signatures consistent with falling meteorites" were registered by radar.

The rocks probably fell to Earth in a remote wooded area near the border with Canada; NASA estimates the largest specimens will be found near Waite, Maine.

Late on April 7, Boris Richard, 21, made an "unauthorized entry" into the embalming room at the Smith Funeral Home in Monroe, Alabama, The Smoking Gun reported.

Richard, who is an



Ashley McBryde to make tour stop June 1 in Redding

As Billboard once noted, “Whether she’s embracing traditional country or southern rock or something in between, Ashley McBryde infuses her songs with authenticity.”

Grammy, Country Music Association and Academy of Country Music award winner **Ashley McBryde** is scheduled to make a tour stop at Redding’s Cascade Theatre at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, June 1. Opening is Meg McRee. For tickets go online to cascadetheatre.org

McBryde, a native of Arkansas, cut her teeth playing country songs in rural biker bars – and it shows. The Grand Ole Opry member’s 2018 major label debut *Girl Going Nowhere* (Warner Music Nashville) charmed The New York Times, NPR, Rolling Stone, Paste, The Washington Post and more, all en route to landing a Grammy nomination for Best Country Album.

Her follow-up *Never Will* was tagged by Rolling Stone as one of the most anticipated of the year alongside NPR, who also ranked her Top 10 RIAA Platinum-Certified single “One Night Standards” as one of the best songs of 2019. The album earned McBryde a 2021 Grammy nomination for Best Country Album, making *Never Will* the only album nominated for Country Album of the Year by the ACMs, CMAs and the Recording Academy in the same award season.

In 2022, her fifth album and third major label release, *Lindeville* (Warner Music Nashville), has brought more praise. Veteran critic Robert Christgau currently has it ranked as the sixth best album over the past year having called it a “concept album with its pants down...simultaneously hilarious and sad as shit.”

McBryde recently dropped a new single, “The Devil I Know,” written by McBryde, Bobby Pinson and Jeremy Stover.

“We’re always hearing something from somebody who thinks they know what’s best for us,” McBryde said on her website about the song. “Lose weight, your hair’s too curly, change this, change that. Things just seem to go better when you trust your own lens to see what’s good for you.”

Meg McRee was validated as more than a driven idealist with the signing of her first publishing deal at Hang Your Hat, a creative joint venture with Concord Music Publishing and hit-songwriter Hillary Lindsey. Since then, she has had songs cut by Grace Potter, Elle King, Caylee Hammack, Paul Cauthen, Carter Faith, Ben Chapman and others. McRee released four tracks off her debut project in March of this year as a songwriter-turned-artist with early support from playlists such as Apple Music’s Southern Craft, Spotify’s Indigo and Fresh Finds, and Amazon Music’s Emerging Americana.



Meg McRee



MASTERWORKS 4: RACHMANINOFF & DVOŘÁK

Guest Artist **Charlie Albright, piano**

Join North State Symphony as they capture in sound the iconic beauty of nature’s endless charm. A highlight for this performance is the World Premier of *Lassen Awakes!* by composer Marko Bajzer, 2022 Artist-in-Residence at Lassen Volcanic National Park. Bajzer was awarded a co-commission by the North State Symphony to produce this original piece, and it will be performed before a live audience for the first time at this concert.

PROGRAM:

BAJZER - *Lassen Awakes!* *World Premiere*

RACHMANINOFF - *Piano Concerto No. 2*

DVORAK - *Symphony No. 8*

Saturday, May 13 | 7:30 PM | Cascade Theatre, Redding

Sunday, May 14 | 2:00 PM | Laxson Auditorium, Chico



Tickets to both performances are available at
northstatesymphony.org

Visit Weaverville and Trinity County



SATURDAY, MAY 20, 2023

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Marty O'Reilly
Fri, May 19 • 6pm



Jonathan Foster
Sat, June 3 • 6pm

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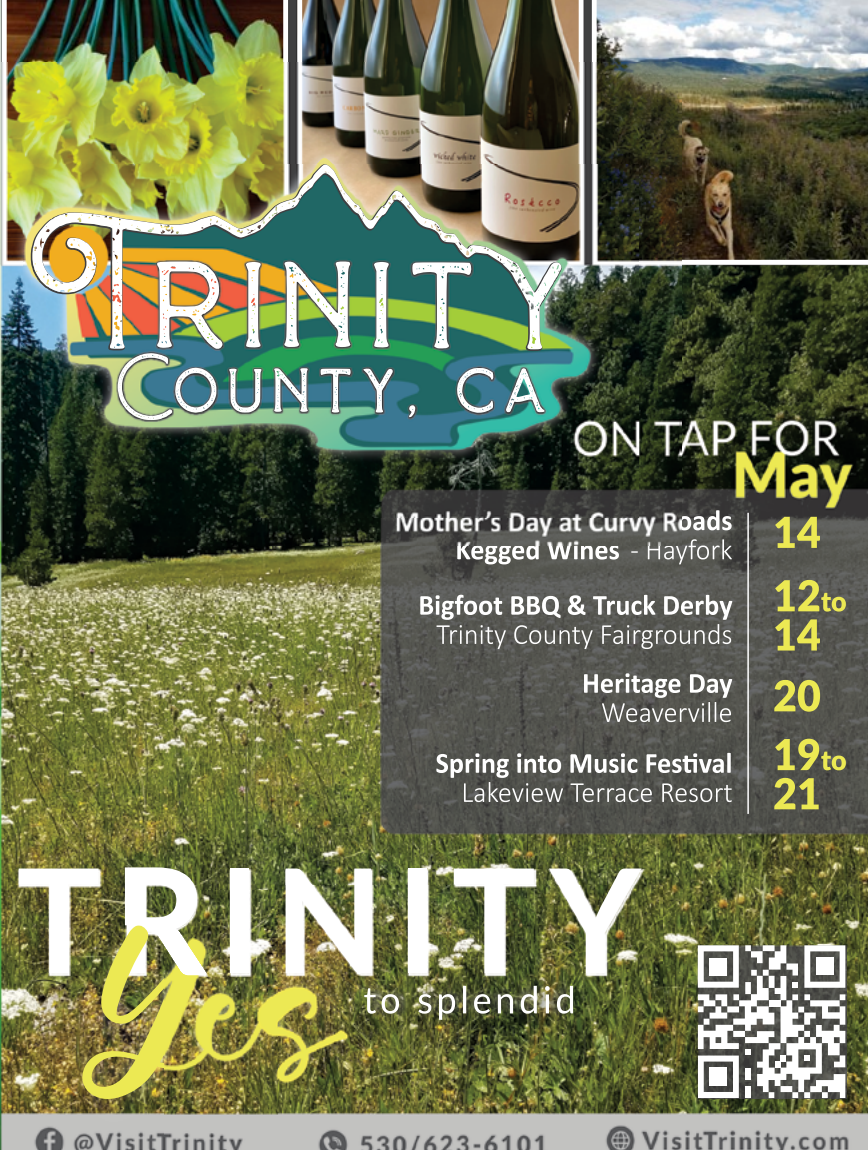
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NEWS of the WEIRD

-From Page 8

“unofficial” worker at the home, used his phone to FaceTime with a friend as he looked over several “post-autopsy” corpses resting there, police said. Richard declined to answer any of the officers’ questions and was released on a \$1,500 bond.

A feud among neighbors in China’s Hunan Province that had been brewing since April 2022 recently came to a deadly head, Fox News reported.

The original feud started when Mr. Gu cut down Mr. Zhong’s trees without his permission. Mr. Gu was further inflamed when Mr. Zhong’s wife towed away the cut trees, so he sneaked onto Mr. Zhong’s property during the night and shone a flashlight at Mr. Zhong’s chickens, causing 500 birds to rush into a corner and trample one another to death.

To add insult to injury, Mr. Gu returned on a different night and employed the same tactic, causing another 640 chickens to die.

A court ruled on April 4 that Mr. Gu had intentionally caused Mr. Zhong to suffer property loss to the tune of about \$2,000. He was sentenced to six months in prison and one year of probation.

Donald the Duck, a mallard who lives in Saint-Nolff, France, is infamous among residents because he seems to live a perfectly normal life with the blade of a knife stuck in his head, Oddity Central reported.

While Donald could swim and eat without trouble, members of the Pinocchio et Sauvageons society decided it should be removed.

On March 31, rescuers managed to catch him, and the surgery was a success, with Donald flying the coop as soon as the door was open. Authorities are now trying to discover who stabbed Donald.

Bayley, a mini “sheepadoodle” dog with her own Instagram account, is famous because she looks remarkably like Snoopy, the cheeky beagle in the comic strip “Peanuts.”

Bayley has more than 240,000 followers on social media, People reported.

Bayley’s black eyes, nose and big, floppy ears make her a dead ringer for the beloved comic character, even though they are not the same breed. Now Bayley’s owner just needs to get a small, yellow bird to round out the cast.

Tony Saunders of Steelton, Pennsylvania, led state troopers on an odyssey, WTAJ-TV reported. Early one morning, officers stopped Saunders on suspicion of a burglary that happened day before.

In the trunk of his BMW, he had a dead deer; when a trooper went to open the rear door, Saunders sped away and

eventually got stuck on railroad tracks. He left the car and ran into a wooded area.

Later that day, a school bus was reported stolen from Abbottstown, and again, police gave chase. Saunders finally ran away from the bus and through parking lots, shedding his clothing as he fled. He was nude when arrested.

At some point, he had transferred the dead deer into the school bus; he told them he was going to use it for garden fertilizer. He faces multiple charges.

“There will be no plans to hunt eggs again.” So proclaimed Jessica Baer, the assistant manager of The Greene in Beavercreek, Ohio, after an Easter egg hunt went awry there.

The Dayton Daily News reported that the activity, which was planned as a well-choreographed event for children, was ruined when people didn’t listen to directions. Instead, during the time period restricted to 1- and 2-year-olds, adults ran out to hunt eggs, which prompted a free-for-all. Some people even allegedly pushed children out of the way or knocked them over.

“This is absolutely unacceptable behavior,” officials said. “We feel the community will be better without the hunt.”

Siva Moodley, a pastor at The Miracle Centre near Johannesburg, South Africa, died on Aug. 15, 2021, Oddity Central reported. But until recently, his body lay at a funeral home – for almost 600 days – because his family members were convinced he would come back to life.

The mortuary couldn’t move forward on a burial without consent from the family, who at first came to the facility to pray for his resurrection.

“He was a well-known man and does not deserve this kind of treatment,” the mortuary owner said. Finally, he took legal action to further the pastor’s burial. In response, the Gauteng High Court authorized a mandatory burial or cremation, and on March 16, Moodley was finally laid to rest.

In Dallas, grocery worker Coby Todd, 21, is sure that a “mischievous child ghost” pushed a shopping cart into his car as he was leaving work, Fox News reported.

The day before, Todd had gone “ghost hunting” at a home in Frontier Village, Texas, and had sensed the presence of a “little boy” spirit, he said. He thinks the spirit followed him home and to work the next day.

“Maybe he was trying to play with me,” Todd said. He checked out the store’s security footage to see who might have pushed the cart, and it does appear to suddenly turn and roll on its own toward Todd’s car. The damage amounts to about \$2,500, and Todd said “it upset me. It’s not fake.”

The Environmental Protection Agency released the findings of a study revealing that more than 9 million lead pipes carry water into homes across the United States, the Associated Press reported.

The survey also ranked the states in order of how many lead pipes are still in use; Florida was first, with more than 1 million pipes underground.

In 1986 Congress amended the Safe Drinking Water Act, prohibiting the use of pipes, solder or flux that were not “lead free” in public water systems or plumbing in facilities providing water for human consumption. Erik Olson of the environmental group Natural Resources Defense Council was surprised at Florida’s position on the list because lead pipes were installed mostly before Florida’s population rapidly grew.

“We look forward to hearing an explanation,” he said. The survey will be used to distribute funds from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

Channing Vanderbilt, 31, was arrested in Chandler, Arizona, after a shooting that killed a 58-year-old man, AZFamily reported.

When officers responded to the scene, the victim’s wife said Vanderbilt had approached them as they were retrieving their mail and opened fire.

Oddly, Vanderbilt was also still at the scene, pretending to be a bystander. He denied being involved in the shooting and said he was picking up shell casings as “souvenirs.” He was charged with first-degree murder and other offenses.

Here’s a new thing to worry about: super pigs. Starting in the 1980s, Canadian farmers bred domestic pigs with wild boars, resulting in “super pigs” that are a headache for wildlife and crops, Yahoo! News reported.

Now, the hybrids, which sometimes grow to 600 pounds, are moving south into the United States.

“They are the most invasive large mammal on the planet. Period,” said Ryan Brook, a wildlife researcher at the University of Saskatchewan.

The pigs feed on agricultural crops but also damage the soil by digging in it. They eat reptiles, birds and even white-tailed deer, and they contaminate water.

While some have suggested hunting as a way to control their numbers, Brook said, “You simply can’t BBQ your way out of a wild pig problem.”

Officials in Montana have introduced the “Squeal on Pigs!” campaign encouraging residents to report feral swine, and North and South Dakota have reported possible populations.

In Australia, artist Dani Reynolds has overtaken a record previously held by actress Drew Barrymore for the world’s widest wig, NDTV reported.

Reynolds worked with another artist, Meg Wilson, to create the 8-foot-6-inch hairpiece using synthetic hair, a bike helmet, PVC pipes, pool noodles, cable ties and aluminum rods – plus two giant pink bows. Reynolds said the biggest challenge was making sure the wig was

balanced: “Not having a background in structural engineering or prop-making made this quite a difficult task,” she said. The enormous wig took the women about two months and \$2,700 to complete.

In Caledonia, Michigan, Andrew Clark comes from a long line of Y chromosomes, WZZM-TV reported. For the past 138 years, there have been no girls born to his family – until St. Patrick’s Day, when Clark and his wife, Carolyn, welcomed Audrey Marie.

All the way back to 1885 and Clark’s great-great-grandfather, only sons have been born to the family.

“It was just joy, you know, just that she was here and healthy,” Carolyn said. “It made it even more special that it was a girl.”

Already this year, representatives of a fictional country called the United States of Kailasa have participated in two meetings at the United Nations, Oddity Central reported. Founded by Indian fugitive and “supreme pontiff of Hinduism” Nithyananda Paramashivam, the virtual nation claims to be a sovereign state for Hindus who have been “persecuted for over a decade.”

In January, Kailasa suggested it had been officially recognized by the United States of America through a sister-city agreement with Newark, New Jersey, but U.S. authorities later rescinded the arrangement. A U.N. representative explained the country’s access by saying the meetings are open to the public.

How did your bracket hold up? If it busted, here’s some other basketball news that might cheer you up.

Sporting goods company Wilson is reinventing the basketball, Oddity Central reported, with a new prototype that doesn’t require inflation.

The Wilson Airless Prototype uses a “research-grade” polymer material to achieve the necessary bounce; the surface is a lattice design that keeps the traditional binding pattern so players can grip the seams of the ball more easily. There are still kinks to work out, including how to manage small objects that can get inside the ball.

A flamboyant woman named Ashley Cream went before the Boca Raton Planning and Zoning Board with a pressing concern: She suggested that March 10 should be designated Sugar Daddy and Mommy Appreciation Day.

WFLA-TV reported that Cream, accompanied by an elderly man in a wheelchair, started her appeal by telling board members they were “looking absolutely fabulous, a little bit serious.”

She went on to say that sugar daddies and mommies are “responsible for college educations, cars, homes, rents, jets, Birkin (bags) and the occasional body enhancement” – though she claimed to be “all natural” as she gestured toward her chest.

Councilman Arnold Sevell replied that her idea is “a city council issue,” and she and her companion left the meeting.



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'Ruthless!' returns to Axiom a year after car accident involving cast member shut down the musical comedy

The Axiom Repertory Theatre production of *Ruthless! The Musical*, which had its debut in the summer of 2022 only to be cut short after one of the actors was injured in an automobile accident, returns to the stage in May.

"It was slated for our Summer Repertory Season in 2022 and, in fact, opened to two wonderfully received performances," Ken Hill, Axiom's artistic director and CEO who directs this production, said in an email. "However, one of the show's stars, Mat McDonald, was involved in a serious auto accident while coming to the theatre for an evening performance."

McDonald's back was broken in two places and he suffered other significant injuries as well, Hill said.

"I was told Mat was injured and was in the green room," he said. "I got back there and the entire cast and crew were gathered around as Mat, clothes blood stained and torn, was sitting in front of the mirror trying to get ready for the show. He was devastated that we canceled the show on the spot, and he was whisked straight away to the hospital for emergency care."

"What a trooper. He was shedding tears, not from his injuries, but because the show was canceled."

Hill said that following a year of rehab, McDonald told everyone he was ready to once again take the stage in the physically demanding production.

So, following a nearly year-long delay, Axiom once again presents the award-winning musical comedy, *Ruthless!*

The show opens on May 12 and runs weekends through May 27. Tickets are available at axreptheatre.com/ruthless.

With book and lyrics by Joel Paley and music by Marvin Laird, the aggressively outrageous musical garnered good reviews during its long Off-Broadway run, which began in 1992.



PHOTO / Kim Mobley

Full *Ruthless!* cast, from left to right: Michaela Duarte as Tina, Samantha Bautista as Judy/Ginger, Mathew McDonald as Sylvia/Ruth, Amy Dunn as Ms. Thorn, Cassie McEachen as Louise/Eve, and Pamela Carney as Lita.

The New York Observer wrote, "Malicious, delicious, a total joy!" while Manhattan Digest said, "*Ruthless!* surpasses all the standards one expects in a musical comedy." And the Chicago Sun Times called it "Hilarious fun... Demonically funny!"

Hill said the musical has been described as *The Bad Seed* meets *Gypsy*, or, as the New York Times put it, "a spiked Shirley Temple of a show."

Ruthless! won the 1993 Outer Critics Circle Award as Best Off-Broadway Musical. It also won the 1991-1992 Drama Critics Award for Best Lyrics by Paley, and five Musical Stages Magazine Awards in 2002 for its run in London.

So what's the story?

From Axiom's description on their website, eight-year-old Tina Denmark knows she was born to play Pippi Longstocking, and she will do anything to win the part in her school musical.

"There are those who are ruthless when it comes to pursuing fame and fortune, but no one more so than eight-year-old Tina Denmark, an adorable, ferociously talented little girl who will do anything - ANYTHING - to be a star," Hill said. "Where does all her remarkable talent and ruthless drive come from?"

Well, apparently "anything" includes murdering the leading lady.

Actress and singer Laura Bell



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PHOTO / Kim Mobley

Michaela Duarte as Tina playing Bubbles.

Bundy portrayed Tina in the original Off-Broadway production with Natalie Portman and Britney Spears as understudies.

Axiom's *Ruthless!* stars Michaela Duarte as Tina Denmark, a Broadway bound third grader with a murderous streak; Sam Bautista plays Judy Denmark, Tina's doting mother; Mat McDonald is Sylvia St. Croix, Tina's manager and mentor; Cassie McEachen portrays Louise Lerman/Eve, who is Tina's rival and, as Louise, is chosen to play Pippi Longstocking in the school musical; Amy Dunn is Ms. Thorn, Tina's theatre teacher who gave up Broadway for a safer career; and Pamela Carney portrays Lita Encore, Tina's grandmother who is a theatre critic and hates musicals.

"Playing Tina has been one of the most fun experiences I've ever had in theatre, as she's so much different than myself," Duarte said. "She knows what she wants - to star in her school's production of *Pippi in Tahiti* - and isn't afraid to take matters into her own hands when things don't go the way she's planned."

Inspired by Rhoda from *The Bad Seed*, Duarte said Tina is a perfect angel one moment and a murderous villain the next.

"That dichotomy in her has been an especially fun discovery," she said. "This whole show is ridiculous in the best way. Even though the audience goes into the performance with the knowledge that Tina is going to murder Louise, it doesn't feel like a spoiler. There are a million other hilarious surprises that are sure to have them laughing the whole night through."

Duarte said there was much debate among cast and crew over Tina being described as the central character of the musical.

"In fact, during our final week of rehearsals last year, Ken challenged us to out-diva each other onstage," Duarte said. "Each night, he would choose one of us as the top diva, and we got to wear a beautiful, sparkly crown for the evening. I believe each one of the characters, in their hearts, believes they are the star of the show. They're all ruthless enough to fight for that title, too."

"I will say, while trying not to spoil the ending, that Tina comes out on top. How, though, is up to the audience to discover."

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Shasta College 70th Art Student Exhibit May 3-16

Shasta College presents the 70th annual Art Student Exhibit from May 3-16.

Jurors Melanie Ross and Travis Collinson will choose an exhibit from the work of student artists, who submitted over 400 entries, and award the most exceptional pieces with cash and merchandise awards totaling over \$1,000.

Ross works at the intersection between art and technology stemming from her time as the director of the Dolby Chadwick Gallery in San Francisco. Collinson, her partner, is an accomplished and award-winning Bay Area Artist.

The exhibition will feature a wide range of pieces, spanning all genres and media.

The Juror's Lecture is scheduled to be held on Friday, April 28, from noon to 1 p.m. in Room 400 on the Shasta College Main Campus. The Reception and Awards Ceremony will be held on Thursday, May 4, from 5 to 7 p.m. in the Shasta College Art Gallery. This is a free event and is open to the public.

Shasta College Art Gallery is open Monday and Wednesday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Tuesday and Thursday 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., and Friday 9 a.m. to noon.

For more information, email Susan Schimke at sschimke@shastacollege.edu



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Interesting Facts about Memorial Day

Each year on the last Monday of May, Americans celebrate Memorial Day. Memorial Day is a federal holiday that honors and mourns American military personnel who died while performing their duties in service to the United States Armed Forces. Memorial Day has a rich history and one that's worth revisiting as the nation prepares to honor the sacrifices made by its military personnel over the centuries.

Freed slaves played a role in the establishment of Memorial Day. The American Civil War is the deadliest military conflict in American history, as the Union and the Confederacy each suffered more than 800,000 casualties by the time the war ended in 1865.

According to History.com, as the war drew to a close, hundreds of Union soldiers who were being held as prisoners of war died and were buried in a mass grave in a Confederate prison camp in South Carolina. After the Confederate surrender, more than 1,000 now-freed slaves honored those recently deceased Union soldiers during a ceremony in which they sang hymns and distributed flowers. The ceremony was dedicated to the fallen soldiers and served as a precursor to what is now celebrated as Memorial Day.

Confederate soldiers were honored, too. Confederate losses during the Civil War outnumbered Union losses, and those losses were not forgotten by southerners who survived the war.

History.com notes that, in 1866, the Georgia-based Ladies Memorial Association, one of many similar organizations to arise in the aftermath of the war, pushed for a day to honor fallen Confederate soldiers. In fact, these efforts are believed to have influenced General John A. Logan. In 1868, General Logan, a Civil War veteran who was then serving as commander-in-chief of a group of Union veterans, ordered the decoration of Union graves with flowers on May 30. The day would ultimately be known as Memorial Day.

It took a long time for Memorial Day to become a federal holiday. Despite tracing its origins to the immediate aftermath of the Civil War, Memorial Day did not become an official federal holiday until 1971, more than a century after the war ended.

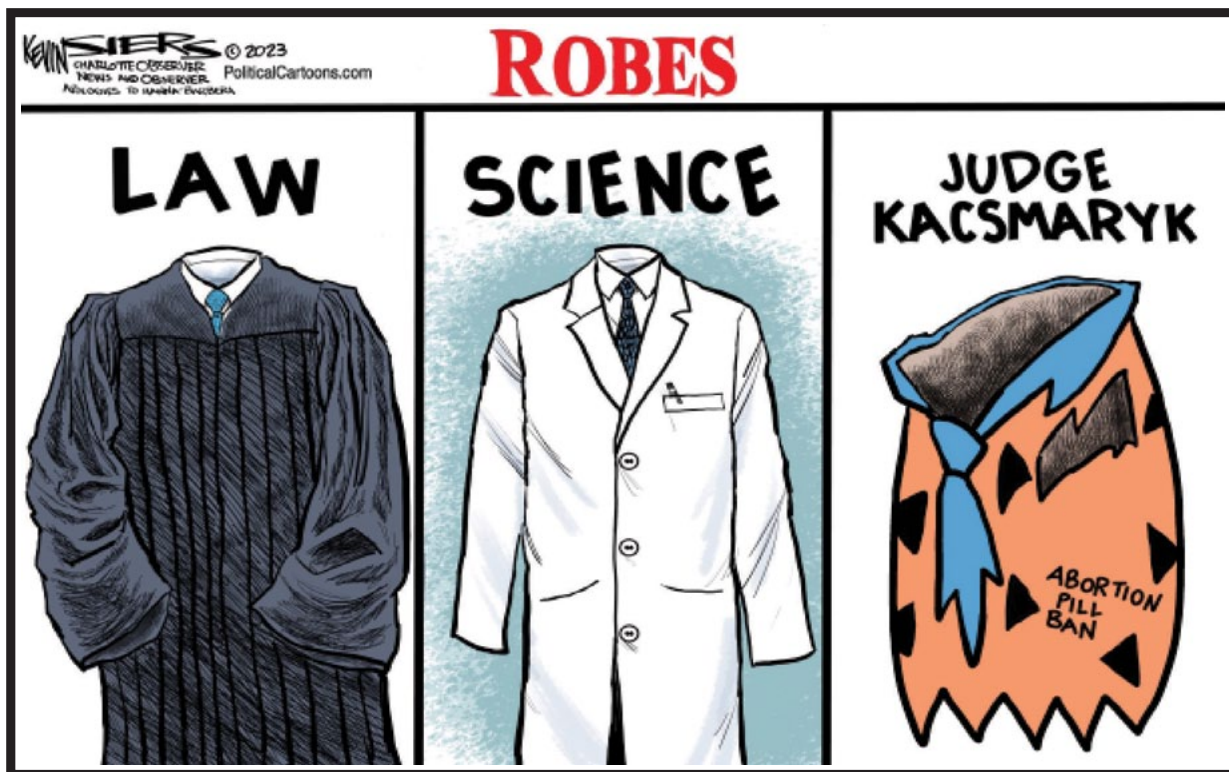
Debate exists about which town has the longest history of celebrating Memorial Day. A handful of towns claim to be the first celebrants, but History.com notes that Waterloo, New York, was officially recognized by U.S. President Lyndon B. Johnson as the birthplace of Memorial Day in 1966. Doylestown, Pennsylvania, and Rochester, Wisconsin, are some other towns that claim to have celebrated Memorial Day since the mid-1860s.



Castle Crag. Photo by Rob Renick.



Quilt: Castle Crag State Park from the River of Quilts Challenge by Cris Rohn Hartman



Art opening featuring Castle Crag scheduled May 13 in Dunsmuir

The Siskiyou Arts Museum in Dunsmuir's Second Saturday Art Opening and Reception, highlighting "The Majestic Castle Crag" is scheduled from 4 to 7 p.m., Saturday, May 13.

Featured in this show are a collection of over a dozen local artists including painters, photographers, quilters and a jeweler. All of the works will focus on the beauty and uniqueness of Castle Crag State Park and the Castle Crag Wilderness Area.

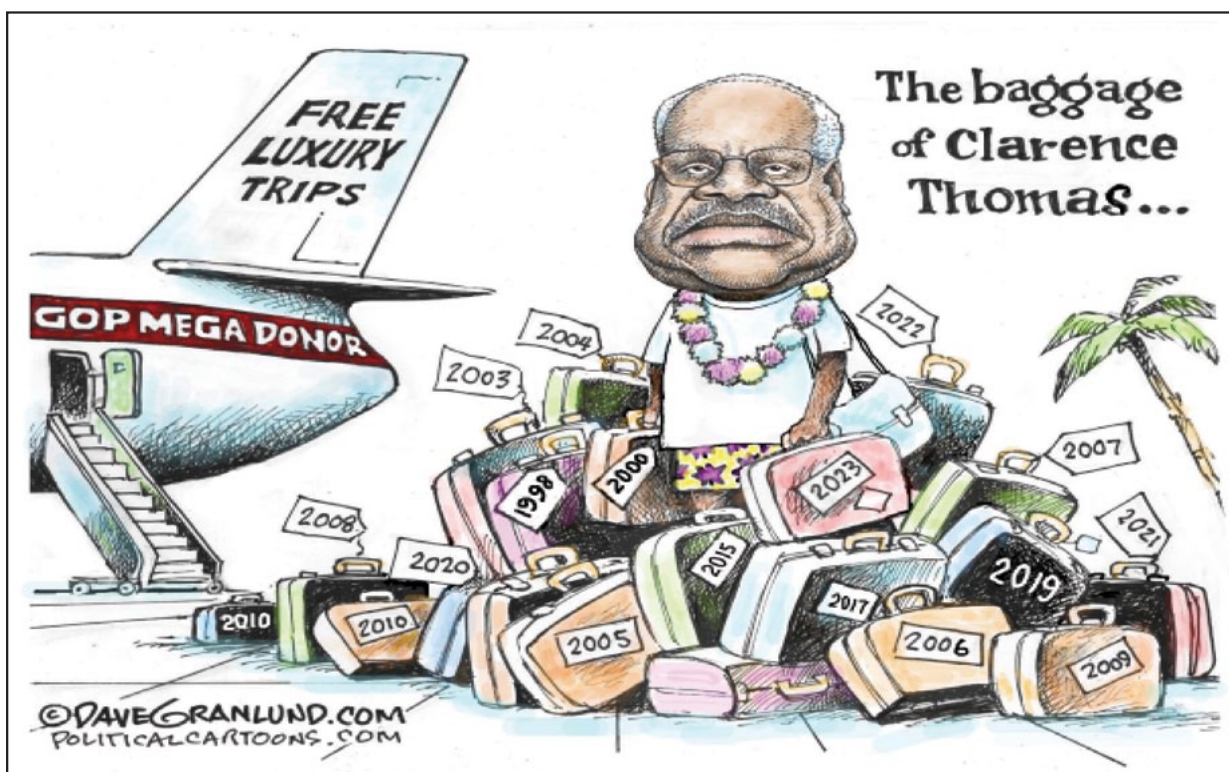
Within the combined 14,000 acres of Castle Crag are endless trails and vistas with a wide variety of native plants, streams and rock formations. Photographs will include rarely seen aerial panoramas of the granitic Crag, plus views of some of the more significant plants, streams and waterfalls.

The show will also provide an introduction to Castle Crag for visitors who are planning to go hiking, camping or picnicking within the park or wilderness area. Brochures, display maps and other information on the history and uniqueness of this Shasta and Siskiyou counties recreational destination will also be available as part of this show.

"The Majestic Castle Crag" will continue in the museum gallery through July 3.

The Siskiyou Arts Museum is a member and volunteer supported non-profit art gallery and gift shop, located in the heart of the downtown Dunsmuir Historic District at 5824 Dunsmuir Ave. Phone: 530-235-4711. Business hours (February through December) are Thursday through Sunday, noon to 4 p.m.; on the Second Saturday of each month, they're open until 7 p.m.

For more information, visit them on the web at siskiyouartsmuseum.org. You can also check out their Facebook page at facebook.com/siskiyouartsmuseum. You can also sign up to receive their monthly e-newsletters when you visit either site.



Can I prepare a will by myself or do I need a lawyer?

Dear Savvy Senior,
I would like to make my last will and testament and would like to know if I can do it myself, or do I need to hire a lawyer?

- Don't Have Much

Dear Don't,
Very good question. Almost everyone needs a will, but only around one-third of American have actually prepared one. Having a last will and testament is important because it ensures your money and property will be distributed to the people you want to receive it after your death.

If you die without a will (a.k.a. dying "intestate"), your estate will be settled in accordance with state law. Details vary by state, but assets typically are distributed using a hierarchy of survivors i.e., first to a spouse, then to children, then your siblings, and so on.

You also need to be aware that certain accounts take precedence over a will. If you jointly own a home or a bank account, for example, the house, and the funds in the account, will go to the joint holder, even if your will directs otherwise. Similarly, retirement accounts and life insurance policies are distributed to the beneficiaries you designate, so it is



By Jim Miller

important to keep them up to date too.

Do You Need a Lawyer?

Not necessarily. Creating a will with a do-it-yourself software program may be acceptable in some cases, particularly if you have a simple, straightforward estate and an uncomplicated family situation. Otherwise, it's best to seek professional advice. An experienced lawyer can make sure you cover all your bases, which can help avoid family confusion and squabbles after you're gone.

If you need help finding someone the National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys (NAELA.org), the National Association of Estate Planners & Councils (NAEPC.org) and the American College of Trust and Estate

Counsel (ACTEC.org) websites are good resources that have online directories to help you search.

Costs will vary depending on your location and the complexity of your situation, but you can expect to pay somewhere between \$200 and \$1,000 or more to get your will made. To help you save, shop around and get price quotes from several different firms. And before you meet with an attorney, make a detailed list of your assets and accounts to help make your visit more efficient.

If money is tight, check with your state's bar association (see FindLegalHelp.org) to find low-cost legal help in your area. Or call the Eldercare Locator at 800-677-1116 for a referral.

If you are interested in a do-

it-yourself will, some top options to consider are Nolo's Quicken WillMaker & Trust (Nolo.com, \$99) and Trust & Will (TrustandWill.com, \$159). Or, if that's more than you're willing to pay, you can make your will for free at FreeWill.com or DoYourOwnWill.com.

It's also recommended that if you do create your own will, have a lawyer review it to make sure it covers all the important bases.

Where to Store it?

Once your will is written, the best place to keep it is either in a fireproof safe or file cabinet at home, in a safe deposit box in your bank or online at sites like Everplans.com. But make sure your executor knows where it is and has access to it. Or, if a professional prepares your will, keep the original document at your lawyer's office. Also, be sure to update your will if your family or financial circumstances change, or if you move to another state.

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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