

AFTER FIVE

THE NORTH STATE MAGAZINE

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THE NEWS, ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT MONTHLY

ON THE COVER

FOWL PLAY

Lisa Collins thought the time was right to bring back her melodramatic comedy 'The Fowl Play in French Gulf,' last performed on the Riverfront Playhouse stage in 2007. It returns this month with the same lead actor, Don Tamblyn as the villain, Wesley LaMar, along with Shasta County newcomer to theatre, Kat Garcia as the sweet young thing, Nelly Hart (both pictured at right). See page 10

BIG FLAT JAMBOREE

Scheduled May 17-18 in the western part of Trinity County, the Jamboree is the result of friends and family honoring the wishes of 'everyone's friend,' Will Hoxie. The avid boater, who tragically died in a kayaking accident on the Kern River in 2023, will



see his wish to put "Big Flat on the map" take fruition with an event that will be part kayak races, part concert, and part fundraiser for the Will Hoxie Foundation. See page 2

CINEMA SONGS

The North State Symphony will conclude its 2023-2024 season this month with the 'Sounds of the Cinema,' featuring classics from Dr. Zhivago, E.T., Disney and more. In addition, pianist Jeffrey LaDeur joins the symphony to celebrate the 100th anniversary of George Gershwin's 'Rhapsody in Blue.' See page 7



Big Flat Jamboree

May 17-18

Event is a chance to have Will Hoxie's dream of 'putting Big Flat on the map' become a reality - and in doing so, also honor the 'friend to everyone'



Will Hoxie kayaking on the Trinity River at Hell Hole.

PHOTO / Sara Harrison - Serendipity Snapshots

By Aaron Williams

To hear his mom tell it, Will Hoxie "kicked up a lot of dust in his 25 years here."

An outdoorsman and river guide who loved being on the Trinity River - or any river for that matter - Hoxie had a dream to "put Big Flat on the map," a close friend said.

Sadly, Hoxie isn't around to see his dream come to fruition. The "friend to everyone" was kayaking the Kern River in June 2023 when the master boater got separated from his party and was pinned under a submerged log. With the swift current, it was weeks before rescuers were able to recover his body.

Will's dream is now being spearheaded by Hoxie's mom, Sara, along with a large circle of friends with the upcoming Big Flat Jamboree.

The May 17-18 jamboree is part kayak races, part concert, and part fundraiser for the Will Hoxie Foundation.

The races happen on May 18 from the Pigeon Point put-in through Hell Hole. A concert featuring Boot Juice will be held in the evening.

You can find information at bigflatjamboree.com

There will also be raffles as the family launches the Will Hoxie Foundation, a non-profit, designed to give back to the community Will Hoxie loved. Part of those plans include a scholarship at Feather River College in Quincy for the Outdoor Recreational Leadership Program, of which he attended.

"Will was a diehard river kid and



SELFIE PHOTO ABOVE / Will Hoxie.
COVER PHOTO / Sara Hoxie

Will, like his mother, Sara, was also a singer-songwriter.

to be able to give back on his behalf to places like Feather River College means so much to me," Sara Hoxie said. "I'm just sorry to have to do it on his behalf."

The 2015 Foothill High grad in Palo Cedro had long dreamed of putting on a jamboree where fellow river lovers could come and compete in a fun manner that helps raise money for projects.

"He had started submitting the paperwork and everything because he loved this area and considered it home," said Brianna Carreira, owner of Bigfoot Rafting.

She said being one of those putting

on the Big Flat Jamboree is a way of giving back to Will and carrying out his dream and vision.

"He was into the river community," she said. "It's been hard to wrap our heads around this...but I know he would be most excited about this. He'd be so happy this is going to happen."

Carreira said Hoxie so loved Big Flat that he risked his own safety in 2021 to stay behind and help her and a few others save parts of the town during the Monument Fire.

"Moments before the fire came into town I told him he needed to leave," she recalled. "He asked 'Are you going to leave?' And when I said I wasn't he told me 'If you're not, then I'm not.'"

"There were five of us that stayed and ran around with hoses. We saved the whole east part of town."

All those who are spearheading the jamboree say it's been a learning process as well as a healing journey. But they're also certain the river community will come out to support Will's dream and memory.

"His dream was to bring life down to the river," said Emily Suda. "This has been a learning process, but Will was a ray of sunshine and I want to help make my friend's legacy come to life."

Carreira said all of those involved hope to see a good turnout and grow this event.

"We definitely want this to be an annual event," she said. "If we're able to secure some extra funding and get more venues, it could become a weekend-long festival."

"We don't know what to expect. We

"He was into the river community. It's been hard to wrap our heads around this... but I know he would be excited about this. He'd be so happy this is going to happen."

**- Brianna Carreira
Bigfoot Rafting**

hope a lot of people come out and help set this up for the future."

Sara Hoxie said she knows "it's going to be bigger than some people think."

She said the past 10 months have been difficult, but the work on the jamboree helps smooth out the rough days.

She takes solace in that he died while doing what he absolutely loved - being on the river.

"Doing this is like walking in quicksand, but it gives me a purpose and it's all around his memory and keeping his energy alive," she said. "When people want to talk about Will it makes me happy."

"He was pretty cool and I miss him."

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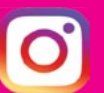
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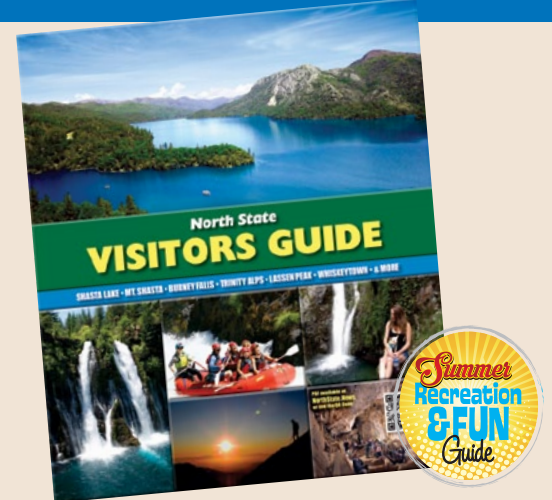
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No telephone call submissions; email or regular mail only.
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Outpatient decluttering

By Jase Graves



Because I'm a professional practitioner of the pedagogical arts (known in some parts as fancy book learnin'), I'm privileged to enjoy a Spring Break holiday that usually falls during the same week my semi-grown daughters are also out of school.

Back in the good old days when the girls still spoke to me with actual words, we would spend our Spring Breaks together – playing at the park, riding bikes, or sharing the trauma of a Disney character's parental death scene.

This year, instead of bonding with me and giggling about my excessive ear hair, all three daughters struck out on their own to sigh dramatically and roll their eyes elsewhere.

My eldest and most expensive daughter took a trip with a friend and several of my credit cards to enjoy the urban vibrancy of Las Vegas. My middle daughter and her sorority sisters soaked up the sun and repelled the advances of countless pec-flexing goobers on the sugar-white sands of Orange Beach, Alabama. My youngest and quietest daughter communed with nature, her best friend, and a jumbo bag of snack cheese on an all-day picnic. I took the family doglets out to potty several times.

Amid these canine assaults on my lawn, I took the opportunity of a daughterless house to do some decluttering. Yes, we are those people who keep things that we might (but probably won't) need some time in the next fifty years – because who knows when that free miniature tube of toothpaste I got from the dentist in 1997 might come in handy (along with the other 34 tubes in the same drawer).

I'm sad to say that after an entire week of decluttering, I only made it through our laundry room. The following is a catalog of the clutter I decluttered in there.

First, I got rid of two large Rubbermaid tubs full of cables, wires, cords, adapters, and about a hundred other electronic/computery-type thingies I couldn't identify. I did feel a slight twinge of fear that this stuff might be important, but since I hadn't opened the tubs since it was still cool to wear a pager, I decided it was safe to let them go.

Next, I reduced the lifespan of my lumbar spine by lifting down a cardboard box with long-forgotten contents to discover about 60 pounds worth of seashells inside. Yes, seashells. After taking our girls on numerous trips to the beach over the years and allowing them to bring home every fragment, shard or sliver of what might once have been a seashell, I'm sure we thought we would get crafty someday and open a seashell décor emporium. Instead, I now have to perform the geezer shuffle when I walk.

Next to the seashell hoard was a second mystery box that revealed a complete set of what appeared to be old martini glasses. Neither my wife nor I have any idea where these came from or why they had been marinating in dust on a shelf above our dryer for the past twenty-odd years. We've never made a martini or even drunk a martini. And, as far as we know, neither have our parents—though mine probably should have done so regularly during my teen years.

This summer, I plan to have one of my famous garage sales and transfer ownership of these delightful objects to other folks who can find them boxed up in their laundry rooms years from now and wonder where in the heck they came from. So if you're in the market for some old electronic waste or some seashell parts, come on by. Maybe I'll even make you a martini, but probably not.

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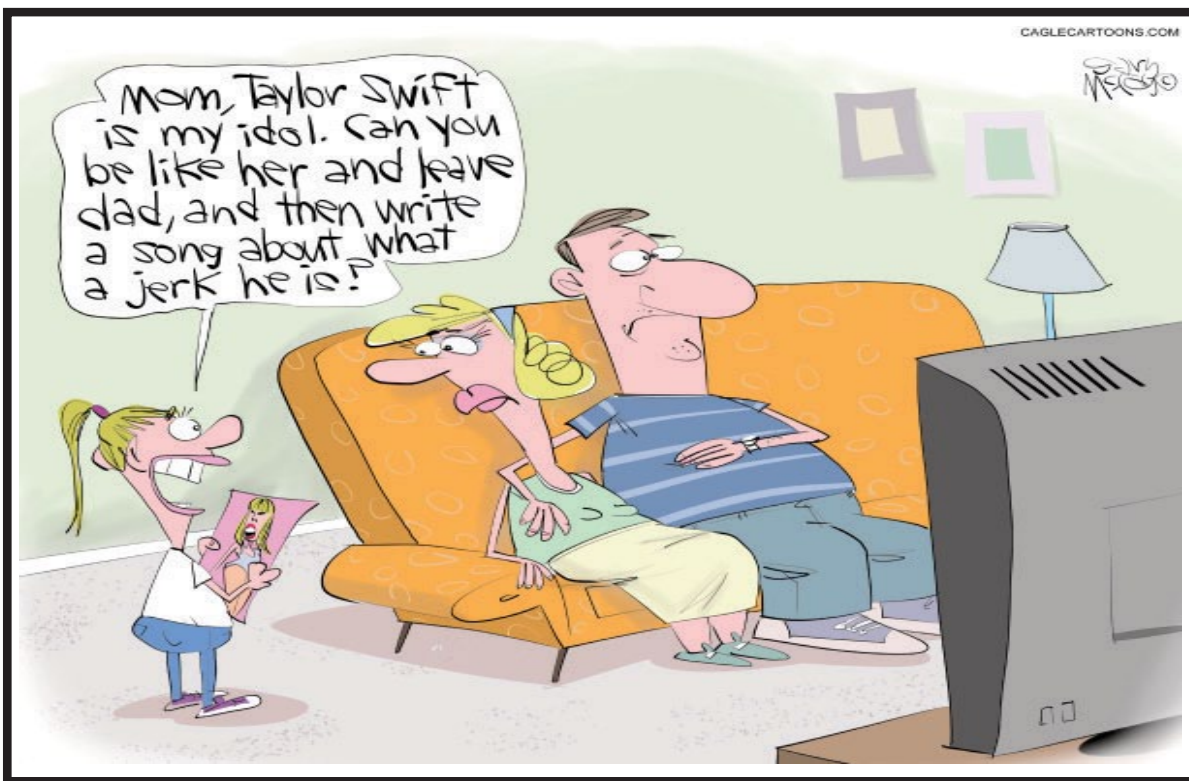




PHOTO / Carlin Ma

Jeffrey LaDeur

North State Symphony to close out season with 'Sounds of Cinema' and guest artist Jeffrey LaDeur

The North State Symphony will conclude their 2023-2024 season this month with the "Sounds of the Cinema."

Performances are scheduled 7:30 p.m., May 11, at the Cascade Theatre in Redding and 2 p.m., May 24, at Laxson Auditorium in Chico.

The orchestra will perform classics from *Dr. Zhivago* and John Williams' unforgettable score to *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial*, as well as familiar sounds from Disney, Harry Potter, and Pirates of the Caribbean.

In addition to all of this, pianist Jeffrey LaDeur joins the Symphony to celebrate the 100th anniversary of George Gershwin's iconic Rhapsody in Blue.

LaDeur is known for his rare blend of insight, spontaneity, and approachable, communicative stage presence.

Clic Musique Magazine (France) lauded "...an impeccable legato, a beautiful palette of nuances, and an always well-balanced sound."

In March of 2018, LaDeur made his solo recital debut at Carnegie Hall on the centennial of Claude Debussy's death. He appears regularly with orchestra and maintains a repertoire of over 40 concerti.

LaDeur is the founder and artistic director of the San Francisco International Piano Festival and president of the American Liszt Society, San Francisco

Bay Area Chapter.

2023-2024 season highlights for LaDeur include engagements at the International Piano Series, College of Charleston, Mendocino Music Festival Piano Series, Rossmoor Chamber Music Society, and the Vallejo Symphony led by Marc Taddei.

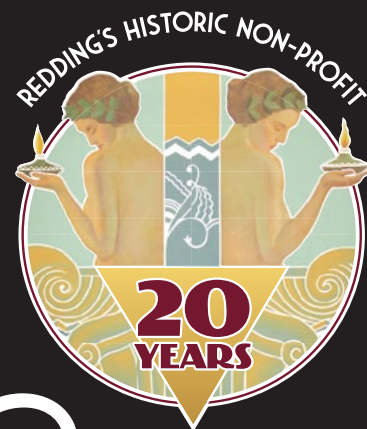
LaDeur's most recent solo recording features music of Liszt and was released by Music & Arts in April of 2022.

Critic Henry Fogel wrote, "The beauty of his coloration, the rightness of his phrasing, and his sensitive dynamic shaping, all draw the listener into Liszt's world."

An active educator, Jeffrey offers masterclasses frequently as guest artist in universities throughout the United States and coaches gifted pre-college piano and string ensembles at Young Chamber Musicians in Burlingame, California.

LaDeur holds degrees from the Eastman School of Music and San Francisco Conservatory of Music in piano performance and chamber music, respectively. He counts among his teachers Mark Edwards, Douglas Humpherys, Yoshikazu Nagai, and Robert McDonald.

For tickets and more information, go online to northstatesymphony.org



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NEWS of the WEIRD

Larry Doil Sanders, 55, of Allen, Oklahoma, was convicted of first-degree murder in the killing of his friend, Jimmy Glenn Knighten, 52, in July 2022.

The Ada News reported that Sanders and Knighten were fishing together when Sanders believed he saw three sasquatch-looking figures near the river.

After strangling Knighten, who he thought had been acting suspiciously, Sanders told relatives that he believed Knighten was trying to summon the sasquatches so they could feast on Sanders, and he killed Knighten in self-defense.

Witnesses said Sanders is a regular user of methamphetamine, which ramps up his Bigfoot rhetoric.

His defense was that having used meth three or four days before the murder, he was in a drug-induced psychosis. He'll be sentenced in June.

Butte, Montana, residents – no strangers to big animals – got a surprise on the morning of April 16 when they spotted an elephant strolling down Harrison Avenue, NBC Montana reported.

"Pretty exciting," said Josh Hannifin, co-manager of the Civic Center Town Pump.

"Man, they move fast when they just walk."

The Jordan World Circus was in town, and surveillance cameras caught Viola escaping from her pen after being startled by a car backfiring during her bath time.

Handlers were able to catch Viola with no trouble after about 20 minutes.

Suburban residents in Cape Town, South Africa, had a close encounter with a hippopotamus in the wee hours of April 14, Independent Online reported.

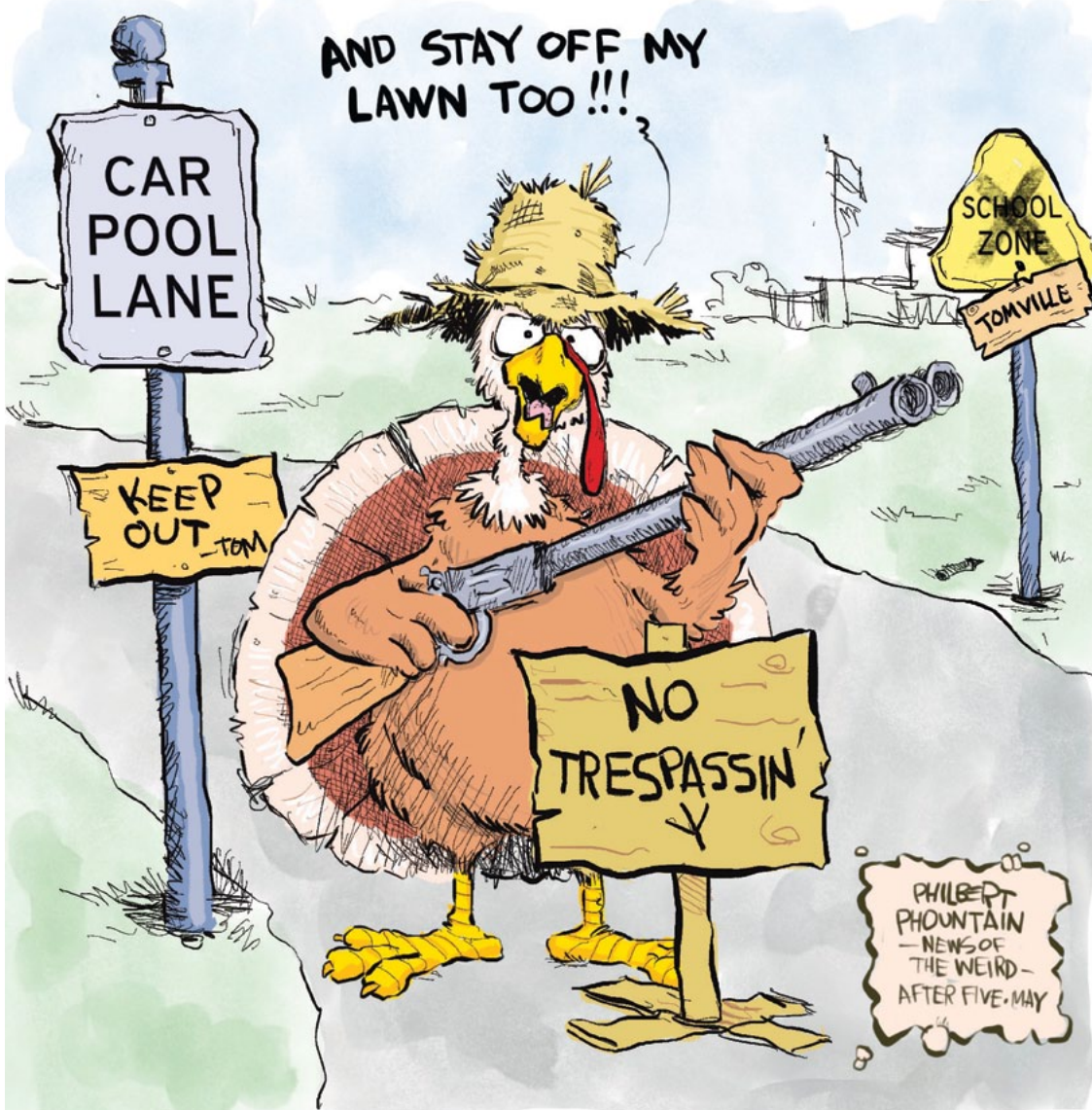
The hippo broke through a fence at the Rondevlei Nature Reserve after getting into a scuffle with a dominant male there.

Resident Ashraff Schwartz said that when police cornered the animal, it ran into his yard.

"My 74-year-old mom watched ... as the hippo came straight for our door. It then turned around and ran up the road, but before then, it broke my wall as it jumped over it."

While no one was hurt in the incident, hippos "are responsible for more human fatalities in Africa than any other large animal," the Cape of Good Hope SPCA Wildlife Department noted.

NASA revealed on April 17



Students and parents at Alston Ridge Elementary in Cary, North Carolina, have been dealing with a unique carpool annoyance: an aggressive pest of a turkey. WTVD in Durham reports that the bird pecks at cars, windows, people – any perceived threat in "his" territory. "This was a young male turkey who probably was looking for a mate ... and was unable to find one," said Cary Animal Services Officer Beth Wilson. "He was trying to claim a territory, and I guess he decided the carpool lane was going to be it." Wilson predicts Lonely Tom will chill out – just as soon as his hormones die down.

that the object that crashed through the roof of a home in Naples, Florida, was indeed space trash – specifically, garbage jettisoned from the International Space Station in March 2021.

United Press International reported that on March 8, a 1.6-pound, 4-inch-long cylindrical object came through Alejandro Otero's roof.

NASA said the object was what remained of a 5,800-pound pallet of depleted nickel hydride batteries.

"The hardware was expected to fully burn up during entry into the Earth's atmosphere," NASA said. "However, a piece of hardware survived reentry."

A 19th-century fortress in

Antwerp, Belgium, undergoing archaeological excavation turned up a mysterious finding: a British train car from around 1930.

United Press International reported that the wooden London North Eastern Railway car was originally used for "removals" – moving property from one residence to another.

"It's a mystery as to how the carriage came to be in Antwerp," said consultant archaeologist Femke Martens.

"Unfortunately there's very little left of the relic as it disintegrated while being excavated."

Jessica Daley, a toll worker along the Garden State Parkway in New Jersey, called in sick to work because she had

"a gut feeling that something was going to happen. Like something terrible was going to happen," she said.

She felt the premonition was about a car accident, NBC New York reported.

Sure enough, about four hours later, a garbage collector's truck slammed into a tollbooth – the one Daley is usually in, she said.

The toll collector and truck driver both suffered serious injuries.

"I dropped to my knees and just started crying," she said. "I was praying for everybody involved." She was back at work the next day.

Investigators caught their targets in a puzzling money-

making scheme in Rochelle Park, New Jersey.

NBC New York reported that Detective Nick Mercoun and his partner arrested 77-year-old Alfredo Rodriguez and 54-year-old Hector Cortes, whom they dubbed the Shopping Cart Bandits.

The two had stolen at least 140 carts from the Shop-Rite grocery, which Mercoun believes they were selling for about \$200 wholesale.

"It was about \$28,000 worth of shopping carts," he said. The Food Marketing Institute estimates that 2 million shopping carts are stolen each year.

Who knew? Rodriguez and Cortes are rolling along at the Bergen County Jail.

Independent Online reported that fashion house Balenciaga has introduced a clear plastic bracelet that resembles a roll of packing tape, to the tune of about \$3,000.

The "Gaffer Bangle" includes an inside label that reads "Balenciaga Adhesive -- Made in France."

The company reportedly unveiled the bracelet at Paris Fashion Week, and reviews are sticky: One Reddit commenter noted, "When will people learn Balenciaga's schtick is to generally make a fool of its consumers?" Another said, "Rich people want to feel poor so bad."

Lakesha Woods Williams, 29, was arrested on a felony child abandonment count in Houston after leaving her 8- and 6-year-old children home alone while she went on a cruise, The Smoking Gun reported.

Neighbors saw her leaving her luxury apartment with "luggage and bags" and didn't see her return.

When police were summoned, they found the two children in the apartment, which was "in complete disarray and had trash and leftover food all over the unit."

The kids said their mom was on a cruise and they didn't know when she would be back.

Officers found a webcam that Williams was using to "watch and talk to the children."

When she appeared in court, the judge noted that witnesses had said it was "not the first time something like this has occurred."

The kids are with their aunt while Williams is held in jail.

A man with the Facebook name Grampian Stormtrooper

–Please See Page 14

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Riverfront revives a 'fowl play' melodrama

A melodramatic comedy that can trace its beginnings back more than 40 years ago will return to the Riverfront Playhouse stage for the first time since 2007 when they present "Fowl Play in French Gulch."

The play, scheduled weekends from May 10-26, is written and directed by Lisa Collins, a longtime member of the local Redding theatre community. For ticket information, go online to riverfrontplayhouse.net.

"I originally wrote the play in 1982 when living in Fairfax, my hometown," Collins said in an email. "I had just returned from college at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, where I discovered a fantastic theater company in nearby Oceano called The Great American Melodrama. They use quality talent and put together very entertaining shows that combine a comedy (often a melodrama), audience interaction, and a short vaudeville show. It is actually still going strong today and we went down for a visit this past February to get re-inspired."

Collins said she was part of a small theatre group called The Fairfax Players and wrote the play for them to perform. The original title was "Harts of the West, or Run For the Round House Nelly, He Can't Corner You There."

"When we - my husband Bill Collins, daughter Kat, and I - moved to Redding and became involved with local theater, producing our Murder Mystery Dinner Theater at C.R. Gibbs from 2004 to 2005, we thought it would be a good fit to dust off the melodrama script for The Riverfront Playhouse in 2007," she said. "With so many colorful local references to the old west and gold rush, I tweaked the play to add characters and places in Shasta County - including the infamous Ruggles Brothers and the French Gulch hotel."

After a visit to the French Gulch Hotel in 2007, they actually re-worked the ending and now prominently feature the unique bar that is still there today. Collins said the play is an homage to traditional melodrama.

"My family loved to play the 'You Must Pay The Rent' napkin game at the dinner table," she said. "If you don't know that game, you will learn it when you come to the show."

Collins said it was also inspired by The Great Race - a film and "the ultimate melodrama" with Jack Lemmon, Tony Curtis and Natalie Wood - and the original Star Wars movie, also a classic melodrama, that had just come out in theaters a few years earlier.

The plot of the melodrama is Nelly Hart (played by Kat Garcia) is the sweet young thing, and she and her sister are behind in the rent they owe to the dastardly Wesley La Mar (played by Don Tamblyn, who is reprising the role from the 2007 production) the richest man in town who seems to own everything. He really has his eye on the lovely Nelly and tricks the brave but gullible hero Joshua Jordan (played by Anthony Tenyenhuis) into going up into the mountains in search of gold with a fake map.

With Joshua out of the picture, Wesley forces Nelly and her sister to vacate the farm and come to work for him in his



PHOTOS AND COVER PHOTO / Michael Burke

Some of the cast members of "Fowl Play in French Gulch" during rehearsals. Above, left to right around the table: Hannah Robertson (a saloon girl), Sandra Terry (who plays Lottie, the tipsy and emotional housekeeper) and Darryll Alvey (as Henry Miller). Background, left to right: Rick Barram (Sheriff "Buck" Montgomery), Amanda Marsh (Lucy Feeney, who runs the saloon), Ronda Alvey (Petunia, a saloon girl) and Kristine Sampson (girlfriend of Virgil Vigil). Right, Ronda "Petunia" Alvey.



French Gulch hotel and saloon. Joshua returns in the nick of time and in spite of a few more bumbles, ends up saving the day.

"Of course that's how a melodrama ends," Collins said. "Don't think that's a spoiler alert."

She said it was time to revive it and May seemed an appropriate time to bring it to the stage.

"I had always thought that with the western theme, Fowl Play would be a great show to do during (Redding) Rodeo month," Collins said. "Although I wrote, produced, directed and performed musical comedy from a very early age, I have spent the last decade focusing on much more dramatic and serious theatrical projects. After Covid, and so much elevated tension and trouble in our world, I felt the need to go back to something light and fun, so I contacted the Riverfront Playhouse to see if they would like to do it in May 2024."

One thing that sets this production apart from the earlier production is the music.

"A huge enhancement is the live piano accompaniment by the exceptional musician Bill Ruess," Collins said. "Not only does he play accompaniment for the five songs in the show, but he plays theme music and sound effects throughout, elevating the entire production immensely."

Tamblyn, who plays the Villain, Wesley La Mar, actually played the same role when Riverfront first did the show in 2007.

"It was great to see him come back for this production," Collins said. "His voice and manner is perfect for the villain. You will love to hate him."

Tamblyn said playing a villain role

allows him to explore the darker side of his psyche.

"It's fun to be given a license to be bad," he said in an email. "Then you add a comical aspect to it and it's even better."

Tamblyn's last show at Riverfront was in their final show at the old theatre in 2019, "Of Mice and Men," where he played Lennie.

"I fully intended to be amongst the first to appear on the new stage, but the pandemic hit," he said. "The role of Wesley LaMar is the first role I played when I moved to the area in 2006. I loved playing him and thought it would be great if my first show at the new theatre was a revival of my first Riverfront production."

Tamblyn, now in his 49th year of acting, moved here from the Bay Area.

"We have a great cast and crew, so this is going to be a fantastic show. When I left the Bay Area I thought my theatre career might be curtailed. Fortunately, the Riverfront Playhouse and now Axiom are here in Redding, so I can continue to enjoy performing."

Others in the production:

Bill Collins, Lisa's husband, serves as the MC for the play, introducing the audience to the concept of melodrama and instructing them in their role of booing for the villain, cheering for the hero and signing for the sweet young thing.

Kat Garcia plays the sweet young thing, Nelly Hart. Also originally from the San Francisco Bay Area, Hart is just re-joining the theatrical community after a hiatus for family and work. This is her first production in Shasta County.

Anthony Tenyenhuis, who plays the hero, Joshua Jordan, is another newcomer to the Shasta County theatrical community having graduated from Fresno

City College.

Don Potter plays Crazy Uncle Eli who thinks the Civil War is still raging and is always accompanied by "the sergeant" whom only Eli can see. Potter has been in a number of productions at all of the local theater companies, including the Cascade Theater and Axiom Repertory Theatre, but this is his very first appearance at Riverfront.

Potter is also part of The Oak Bottom Boys, a hillbilly, blues, jug band led by Bill Collins, and comprised of all the cowboys in the show. They will be playing music in the lounge for the half hour prior to curtain, then make a special appearance during the show.

"My favorite song they do is called 'When It's Chicken Pluckin' Time in Petaluma,'" Lisa Collins said. "It was written by a very old friend, Bill Akridge, and it's a real hoot."

Amanda Marsh plays Lucy Feeney, who runs the saloon. Stage veteran Pamela Carney will play the roll for one performance on May 11.

The Ruggles brothers are played by Brad Webster (who is also reprising his role from the 2007 production) and Nick Prete, who also treats the audience with egg juggling and chicken jokes in between acts.

Other real-life characters are Sheriff "Buck" Montgomery, played by Rick Barram and his deputy George Albro by Forrest Bryant.

Sean Sampson, a venerable Shasta County actor who was an original member of The Redding Improv Players and has appeared in hundreds of plays in the area, appears as Virgil Vigil, the faithful sidekick of the hero. But what makes it special, Collins said, is that his wife, Kristine Sampson, is making her theatrical debut as his girlfriend, and Nelly's sister.

"It's very sweet and special to see a real-life couple get to play together on stage," Collins said.

But they're not the only ones.

Ronda Alvey, president of the Riverfront Playhouse board of directors, is making her theatrical debut in Fowl Play in the role of Petunia, the saloon girl. Her husband Darryll Alvey, secretary of the Riverfront Playhouse board of directors, is playing Henry Miller, a real-life character who was known as "The Cattle King of California."

"Of course, they are paired up and they are darling to see," Collins said. "Ronda sings a verse of her own and shows a little leg in the process. You don't want to miss it."

The other saloon girls are played with sass and high energy by Hannah Robertson, Leila Walstead and Rebecca Getzinger.

Sandy Terry plays Lottie, the tipsy and emotional housekeeper who keeps the energy high and the laughs coming.

And last minute additions to the cast are Lyn Regan and Marla O'Brien who represent the original settlers of the town - the French.

"They are a subtle presence in ACT II and are tons of fun to watch as they "become" more French as the action builds, playing a very pivotal part in the final scenes in the play," Collins said.



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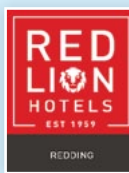
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Axiom presents the Tony Awards triple crown winner of Best Musical, Best Score and Best Book - 'Avenue Q'

The required disclaimer for Axiom Repertory Theatre's May production of actors with muppets should be a warning that this isn't a production to take your kids to.

It reads: "Avenue Q has not been authorized or approved by the Jim Henson Company or Sesame Workshop, which have no responsibility for its content."

Winner of the Tony "Triple Crown" for Best Musical, Best Score and Best Book, Avenue Q is part flesh, part felt and packed with heart.

As the Wikipedia entry for Avenue Q states: "(It's) a musical comedy featuring puppets and human actors with music and lyrics by Robert Lopez and Jeff Marx and book by Jeff Whitty."

"The show's format is a parody of Sesame Street, but its content involves adult-oriented themes. It has been praised for its approach to themes of racism, homosexuality and internet pornography."

Avenue Q is playing at Axiom Repertory Theatre from May 10 through June 1. The two-hour musical is directed by Nancy Hill and stars Gabe Newman as Princeton and Amy Chalfant as Kate Monster.

Chalfant said she loves comedy and she loves music. "(So) I auditioned for Avenue Q because this show has both," she said in an email.

Most recently Chalfant was the Ghost of Christmas Past in Axiom's "A Christmas Carol." She's also been featured in Axiom's productions of "The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime," "Roe," and "Meteor Shower."

"My favorite part of any show is always the music," Chalfant said. "I love to sing and catching harmonies with my castmates gives me a nice little hit of dopamine. As one who loves her dopamine, I must chase the dragon."



PHOTO / Kim Mobley

Gabe Newman is Princeton and Amy Chalfant is Kate Monster in the Axiom Repertory Theatre production of Avenue Q.

The musical tells the timeless story of a recent college grad named Princeton, who moves into a shabby New York apartment all the way out on Avenue Q. He soon discovers that, although the residents seem nice, it's clear that this is not your ordinary neighborhood. Together, Princeton and his new-found friends struggle to find jobs, dates and their ever-elusive purpose in life.

Although the show addresses humorous adult issues, Axiom's press release said it is similar to a

beloved children's show; a place where puppets are friends, Monsters are good and life lessons are learned.

The muppets for the production were provided by a company down south, said Racheal Newman, head of media and graphics for Axiom.

"We rented them from a company in L.A. (PuppetryPlus, powered by Cre8tivespaces). The owner (Roberto Ferreira) was gracious enough to drive them up and give our actors a puppet workshop."

Chalfant said the most challenging

part of using the puppets has been the endurance and coordination it takes.

"Puppeteers make it look easy, but it takes upper body strength," she said.

For tickets and more information go online to axreptheatre.com


Avenue Q is presented through special arrangement with Music Theatre International (MTI). All authorized performance materials are also supplied by MTI. www.mtishows.com

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Find that unique gift for Mother's Day

NEWS of the WEIRD

-From Page 8

was on his way to a DeeCon at the University of Dundee in Scotland when the train suddenly stopped shortly after leaving Aberdeen station, Fox News reported.

A guard approached Grampian, who was in full stormtrooper gear, and asked about his blaster.

“Apparently someone reported it to the police,” Grampian posted on Facebook. “Met by two firearms officers.”

Grampian was removed from the train, asked to return home and get a bag for the blaster and instructed not to wear his stormtrooper armor on the train. “Crazy world we live in,” he noted.

Things got a little heated at the Good Will Fire Co. Station 69A in Pottstown, Pennsylvania, WFMZ-TV reported.

The cabin of a fire engine parked in the station caught fire. Crews were able to extinguish the fire quickly, but smoke damaged two ambulances, a fire rehab unit and the truck bays.

One firefighter was taken to the hospital for smoke inhalation. Pottstown fire officials are investigating the cause of the blaze.

Police in Rose, Idaho, revealed the names of the victim and suspect in a home invasion that took place in March, EastIdahoNews.com reported.

Officials said that around 2 a.m., 85-year-old Christine Jenneiahn was sleeping in her home when she awoke to a man shining a flashlight and pointing a gun at her.

Derek Ephriam Condon, 39, allegedly then handcuffed Jenneiahn and moved her to the living room, where he cuffed her to a chair and asked her where the valuables were.

She told him there were two safes, and he left to investigate. While he was out of the room, Jenneiahn dragged herself and the chair into her bedroom and got her .357 Magnum revolver, which she hid on a nearby couch after returning to the living room.

Ultimately, she made a “now or never” decision and drew the gun, fatally striking Condon with two shots.

He returned fire, hitting her multiple times, but Jenneiahn survived and has already left the hospital.

The case, said Bingham County Prosecutor Ryan Jolley, “presents one of the most heroic acts of self-preservation I have ever heard of.”

Officials said the two knew each other and it was not a random incident.

A 24-year-old man, Yogesh R, in Bengaluru, India, died on March 25 of massive intestinal damage after a friend, Murali, 23, playfully inflated his rectum with a powerful car wash blower.

The friend, an employee at a motorbike service center, had finished washing and drying the vehicle of the victim when horseplay ensued, the Times of India reported.

The dryer’s wand was not close to Yogesh, but the pressure was such that the victim collapsed and was rushed to the hospital, where doctors were unable to repair his exploded colon. Murali was arrested for culpable homicide.

In the wee hours of April 10 at a train station in Sydney, Australia, an unexpected commuter showed up, United Press International reported.

A horse, wearing a blanket, appeared on the Warwick Farm station platform during heavy storms and tried to board the train.

The escapade was captured on security camera video. The horse trotted up and down the platform and chased another rider before its owner was summoned to collect it.

Transport for New South Wales declared that the would-be rider was “only horsing around” and was returned to his residence.

In Kansas City, Missouri, police were summoned after someone saw a mountain goat standing on a ledge under a highway overpass bridge, United Press International reported.

Authorities tried using a rope to rescue the goat, who ended up hanging from the rope for a short while.

Finally a veterinarian on the ground

sedated the animal, and it was taken to a local animal shelter to recover. Apparently, the goat had recently been adopted by a nearby resident and had escaped its enclosure.

At the Country Oaks Elementary School in Hendry County, Florida, two 10-year-old boys were trading more than Lunchables on March 27.

ClickOrlando reported that one of the boys had agreed in February to sell a handgun belonging to his father, who had recently died, to another for \$300.

The gun was located under a shed in the boy’s backyard, along with a baggie containing 74 grams of marijuana.

Both boys were arrested – one for selling a firearm to a minor, the other for purchasing a firearm as a minor. The seller’s mom is a sheriff’s deputy; she was put on administrative leave while the investigation continues.

Peter Owens, 35, of Ellenton, Florida, went to a Walgreens store in Clearwater on Easter Sunday to buy some headphones, The Smoking Gun reported.

While there, he got into an argument with an employee of the store, and the manager, 36-year-old Nicole Merck, tried to intervene, asking Owens to leave the store.

That was when Owens, according to police, struck Merck in the face with his Bible.

Authorities tracked him down, and he admitted striking her “because she was being rude to him.”

The charge was bumped up to a felony because of Owens’ 2020 conviction in Michigan for assault and battery.

Anna Louise Keller, 49, of Seminole, Florida, was shocked – SHOCKED! – on April 8 when Pinellas County Sheriff’s deputies stopped her because she was driving recklessly and, critically, missing her right front tire.

Fox13-TV reported that officers smelled alcohol, and Keller admitted that she had been drinking and was unaware of the missing tire.

She tested over the legal limit, and deputies found four empty Busch Light containers in the car. She was charged with DUI.

When police came across Wylly

James Weeks, 35, in St. Petersburg, Florida, he was sitting in a trash can, on a sidewalk, and completely naked.

The Smoking Gun reported that Weeks told cops he “was allowed to be drunk and disorderly and sit naked in a trash can on the public sidewalk.”

Indeed, they found him to be unsteady on his feet and smelling of liquor.

He also told them he didn’t have to provide his “name or demographics.” He pleaded guilty to disorderly intoxication and resisting an officer without violence and was fined \$520.

In what is apparently a regular prank in Mexico, someone submitted an adults-only video clip of their view of the eclipse on April 8 to an RCG Media news program, the New York Post reported.

But this particular clip was of a man blocking out the sun with his testicles. While the male anchor read on from a list of locations where people could watch the celestial phenomenon, one of the two female anchors gasped as the crude image flashed on the screen.

The male anchor then apologized; an X user with the name Rhevolver took gleeful responsibility for the joke.

At the home of Omar Gabriel Munoz in Sacramento County, California, a package was delivered, Fox News reported.

But when Munoz got home, it wasn’t there.

When he checked his doorbell video, he found out why – and he had to give credit to the porch pirate, who he said showed “a lot of creativity.”

The thief shuffled up to Munoz’s front door dressed as a bag of trash, with only their feet showing, stood over the box and picked it up, then shuffled away.

Munoz said the box contained only two iPhone chargers; he didn’t report the theft to the police because “they have more important things to do.” “At first I was kinda angry but when I saw the video again, I was laughing,” Munoz said.

The U.S. Navy is the subject of much ridicule after it released a photo online depicting Commander Cameron Yaste, the captain of the USS John S.

–Please See Page 16

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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-free 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.

NEWS of the WEIRD

-From Page 14

McCain, shooting a rifle – with the scope mounted backwards and the lens cap still on.

The Telegraph reported that the image also accompanied an official press release and was captioned, “From engaging in practice gun shoots, conducting maintenance, testing fuel purity and participating in sea and anchor details, the #USNavy is always ready to serve and protect.”

One commenter on X noted despondently, “We’re going to lose a major war.”

The 2024 Iditarod race in Alaska got off to a messy start, Sporting News reported. On the first day, musher Jesse Holmes went mano-a-mano with a moose that became aggressive toward his dogs on the trail.

Holmes punched the moose in the nose and went on his way. Soon after, Dallas Seavey and his dogs came upon a moose – it’s not clear whether it was the same one – that was “threatening and belligerent.”

When the moose got entangled with his dogs, Seavey dispensed with the heroics and shot it. As per the Iditarod’s rules, Seavey then stopped for about 10 minutes to field-dress the moose, but he was later assessed a two-hour penalty at the next checkpoint because “the animal was not sufficiently gutted by the musher.” A third musher, Wally Robinson, ran across the moose carcass in the dark, on a trail curving through woods. Race Marshal Warren Palfrey confirmed that “we are making sure that every attempt is made to utilize and salvage the moose meat.” So there’s that.

Dr. Krisztina Ilko, 33, a junior research fellow and director of studies at the University of Cambridge Queens’ College in England, lives in a medieval tower, the Independent reported. But on Feb. 29, Ilko became trapped in her bathroom for seven hours after the wooden door locked behind her and wouldn’t budge. She couldn’t signal or yell for help because the tower walls are thick, and there are no windows in the bathroom. However, she kept her cool and McGyvered the door open using an eyeliner (to push down the door’s latch) and a cotton swab (to pull the locking mechanism away from the door frame). “When ... the door opened, it was exhilarating because I didn’t think it would work,” Ilko said. Since the incident, she’s had the lock removed.

In Kennesaw, Georgia, police responded to the Heritage Park Town Homes after a Toyota Corolla “rammed through the pool fence ... and (she’s) in the middle of the pool,” said the 911 caller.

Fox5-TV reported that the driver suffered some sort of medical emergency and was unconscious when officers arrived; they were able to break a car

window and get her out of the car.

She was taken to a hospital and was expected to make a full recovery, according to Cobb County Police. The pool cover was so strong that the car didn’t sink; a tow truck removed it from the cover later in the day.

The Putnam County (Florida) Sheriff’s Office was flooded with calls after two low-flying F-15 jets from the Florida Air National Guard caused sonic booms, News4Jax-TV reported.

“It destroyed my friggin’ house!” one caller exclaimed, while others thought a bomb had dropped.

“I have major damage, they flew right over my house. The lights were blown off the walls, there’s glass everywhere,” said another.

The National Guard issued a statement saying they were aware of damage sustained by the sonic booms and had established a contact number for residents who had damage claims.

For Connor James Litka, 21, of Bloomington, Indiana, it was “If at first you don’t succeed, try, try again.”

Litka arrived at a Porsche dealership in Louisville, Kentucky, and tried to buy a car with a fake \$78 million check, WAVE-TV reported.

When he was rebuffed, he searched around the back entrance to the showroom, looking for car keys.

Salespeople summoned police, who charged him with criminal trespass and disorderly conduct.

Turns out Litka tried the same stunt the day before at a Land Rover dealership, where he presented a \$12 million check.

Anne Hughes, 71, was standing outside the Best One shop in Tonteg, Wales, where she works, when the electric security shutters started raising, catching her coat and leaving her dangling upside down 7 feet in the air.

The incident was caught on CCTV, Sky News reported; she hung in the air until a shopkeeper helped free her as the shutter was lowered.

“I’m learning to live with the fame,” Hughes said. “I’ll never hear the end of it.” She was uninjured in the mishap.

Rawiya Al-Qasimi, a female reporter, was covering an event in Riyadh when a Saudi Arabian robot called Android Muhammad unexpectedly slapped her posterior during a live shot, the Daily Star reported.

Al-Qasimi pushed the robot’s hand away and rebuked him.

Before the untoward touching, Android Muhammad introduced himself, saying, “I was manufactured and developed here in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as a national project to demonstrate our achievements in the field of artificial intelligence.”

Ironically, had he been a real man, he might have faced jail time for his inappropriate behavior.

Spanish artist Alicia Framis, now based in Amsterdam, has created the perfect husband: a hologram that she designed and named AILex Sibouwlingen, whom she modeled on past paramours, according to EuroNews.

Framis plans to marry him this summer at a museum in Rotterdam, the Netherlands.

On her Instagram page, Framis shares photos and videos of herself and AILex sharing meals and other elements of daily life.

“Love and sex with robots and holograms are an inevitable reality,” Framis said. “They are great companions and capable of expressing empathy.”

Loreen Bea Feralo, 55, and Karen Casbohm, 63, were charged with theft and gross abuse of a corpse after allegedly carrying out a “Weekend at Bernie’s” stunt in Ashtabula, Ohio, The Smoking Gun reported.

Police said, Feralo and Casbohm – who were not related to Douglas Layman, 80, but lived in his home – loaded his corpse into the front seat of a car “in such a manner that he would be visible to bank staff” and drove through his bank, where they used his card to withdraw \$900.

The bank had allowed the women to withdraw from his account before, as long as he was with him.

Having secured the funds, the women then dropped Layman’s body at the Ashtabula County Medical Center emergency room “without providing any information about the man or themselves,” police said.

They were able to identify the women and question them. The women, both of whom have significant priors, said Layman died at home.

Arthur “Jack” Schubarth, 80, of Vaughn, Montana, pleaded guilty to two felony wildlife crimes after the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks conducted a years-long investigation, Business Insider reported.

Schubarth was accused of buying, selling and breeding “alternative” livestock, such as mountain sheep and mountain goats, for captive hunting operations.

Between 2013 and 2021, court documents said, he conspired with others to create a large hybrid species of sheep that would garner higher prices from shooting preserves.

To do so, he brought parts of Marco Polo argali sheep from Kyrgyzstan to the U.S. without declaring them.

His other crimes include forging veterinary documents and shipping hybrid semen to other breeders. He faces jail time, fines and supervised release.

It’s baaaackkk. In the waning days of 2020, a tall silver monolith popped up in various locations in California, Texas, Romania and elsewhere.

Now, Wales Online reports, it’s back. The 10-foot-tall tower, which appears to be stainless steel, turned up near Hay-on-Wye in Wales around March

10, when Richard Haynes came across it while he was out for a run.

“I thought it ... might be a scientific media research thing collecting rainwater. But then I realized it was way too tall and strange for that. It was hollow and I imagine ... light enough for two people to carry it up and plant it in the ground,” Haynes said. Stay tuned.

At the Goodwill store in Du Bois, Pennsylvania, workers found a treasure in a box of old Lego pieces, United Press International reported: a 14-karat gold Kanohi Hau mask from Lego’s Bionicle collection.

Originally priced at Goodwill at \$14.95, the piece eventually sold for \$18,100 to an anonymous collector.

“We didn’t know it was worth anything until people started asking if they could buy it for \$1,000,” said Chad Smith, vice president of e-commerce and technology for Goodwill. Lego created only 30 pieces in gold in 2001.

LAD Bible reported about two unacquainted Brits who were headed to a holiday in Bangkok, Thailand.

At the airport, Mark Garland, 58, of Wiltshire, tried to check in, but gate staff told him he already had.

After some sleuthing, they realized there was another Mark Garland (62, from Bristol) on the flight – and the look-alikes were seated next to each other.

As it happens, they live only about 15 miles apart and sometimes ride the same bus. They even have a friend in common.

“We were so shocked by how strange it was,” said the younger Garland. “It was crazy – I have never known anything like it,” said the older. “I’ve made a friend for life.”

After Jacob Wright, 24, and Cambree Wright, 19, exchanged wedding vows, it was time for pictures, Fox News reported.

So Jacob grabbed his Apple Vision Pro headset and wore it while the photos were snapped.

Jacob said he saw an opportunity to have fun and create a viral moment.

“I was like, ‘Oh, it’d be like such a meme. It’d be so funny if we just took some pictures with it on after the wedding.’”

Sure enough, when they posted the pics, Cambree said she started getting “crazy” messages: “I woke up to 200-plus messages and just random girls telling me to divorce my husband.”

But the bride said the photos “perfectly encompass Jacob and his personality ... and what our relationship is like.”

New Orleans Police Superintendent Anne Kirkpatrick told city council members that rats had infested the department’s building so thoroughly that they made their way into the evidence room and were eating confiscated marijuana.

“They’re all high,” she said, according to the Associated Press. “The cleanliness is off the charts.” She elaborated, saying the building is full of mold and cockroaches, and staff suffer broken air conditioning and elevators.



ABBA tribute band, Summer Night City, at the Cascade Theatre on May 4

"One of the best ABBA tributes we've seen!"

- Las Vegas Weekly

It's no secret that ABBA is one of the most successful and beloved bands of all time. Summer Night City - combining stellar vocals with flawless musical performances into a show complete with costume changes and choreography have resulted in experiences that keep people engaged and, most of all, delivers the magic of ABBA to audiences spanning multiple generations.

Starbright Entertainment presents Summer Night City for a show on May 4 at 7:30 p.m., at the Cascade Theatre in Redding. For tickets, go online to cascadetheatre.org.

Each of the members of Summer Night City bring a wealth of musical and

performance experience. A collection of well-seasoned professional touring and studio musicians back two charismatic singers who bring the voices of ABBA to life for each unforgettable performance.

Gro Bondevik (as Agnetha), Rachel Songer (as Frida), Brenda Stern (backup vocalist), Miro Berglund (keyboards), John Poletti (guitar), Paul Knutsen (bass), and Jimmy Rehn (drums), invite you to join the legions of fans who've already discovered the thrill of a Summer Night City performance, to see and hear for yourself the magic of ABBA live.

Come enjoy such hits as "Waterloo," "Dancing Queen," "SOS," "Super Trouper," "Name of The Game," "One of Us," "Mamma Mia," "I Have a Dream," "The Winner Takes it All" and many more from this ABBA concert experience.

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A run down to London

By Alexandra Paskhaver



England! Merrie olde England!
Glorious England!
How I hate it.

I've been in London for the past month, officially as part of a study abroad program. I spent most of my first week figuring out how to leave Heathrow.

When traveling, the usual questions come up. How's public transport? What's the currency exchange rate? Will I get average food poisoning here, or will it be something really special?

I've started to make sense of the Tube and paying for everything by card. But even if I spent years here, I still wouldn't understand why Londoners eat jellied eels.

As my study abroad advisors put it, this is a valuable multicultural experience where we'll hear multicultural music and play multicultural games and curse multicultural curses, or something.

The one thing that's stood out to me so far is how small my room is. My shower is the size of a telephone booth, only it's less comfortable.

All in all, I'd rather be in... well, Philadelphia's not much better than here. But I could go for St. Petersburg, if it's the one in Florida.

But I can't be in St. Petersburg, basking in the multicultural sunshine. I have to stay in London, choking on fish and chips and swallowing the letter r. Or maybe it's the other way around.

Sure, there have been some nice bits to the trip. I saw a trolley stuck in the wall at Platform Nine and Three-Quarters.

Well, not precisely. All I saw was a massive crowd of people in front of it. At least the same thing didn't happen at Big Ben... rather, the Elizabeth Tower.

Big Ben is the bell, not the building. And any Englishman who corrects you on that is a real pain in the neck.

I ought to thank Parliament for dispersing the tourists. If you set up a massive bell and clang it loudly every hour, you're sure to keep the streets clear.

Somebody should tell our president to set up a similar traffic-clearing mechanism in our capital. Only instead of a bell, I recommend something more American, like a klaxon.

A place that didn't have too many tourists was the Sherlock Holmes Museum. I don't have to tell you where it is if you've read the books.

If you haven't read the books, put on your deerstalker and sleuth it out. Holmes wouldn't have used Google Maps, anyway.

It's a shame we Americans don't have as many icons in our pantheon of fictional characters.

London is where Holmes would have walked. It's where one might have bought a flower from Eliza Doolittle.

It's also the home of that best and greatest of fictional characters, the one who needs no words to make himself known, the man who defines England itself: I refer, of course, to Mr. Bean.

With or without Mr. Bean, London's not the only place worth seeing in England.

I took a neat tour of Stonehenge and Bath, courtesy of The English Bus. My guide's name was Andy. He was in a James Bond film.

That is, he was driving his bus, and the bus made it into the picture. By the transitive property, he's practically Daniel Craig.

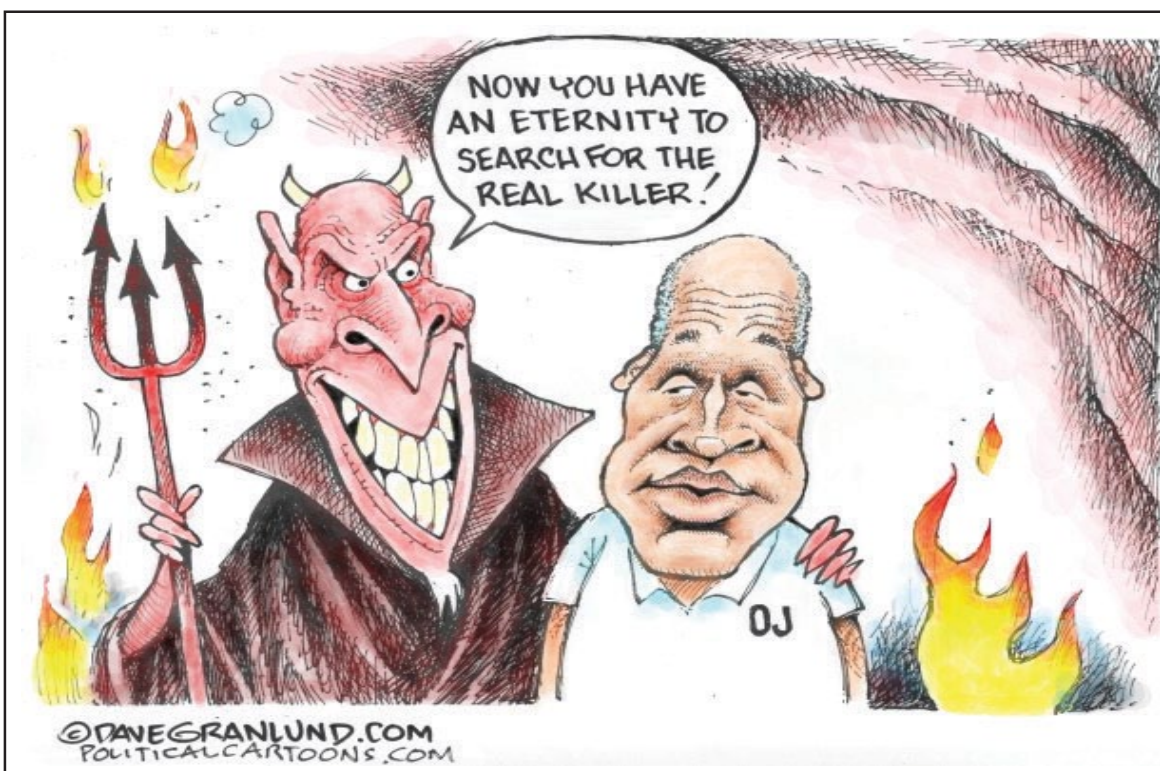
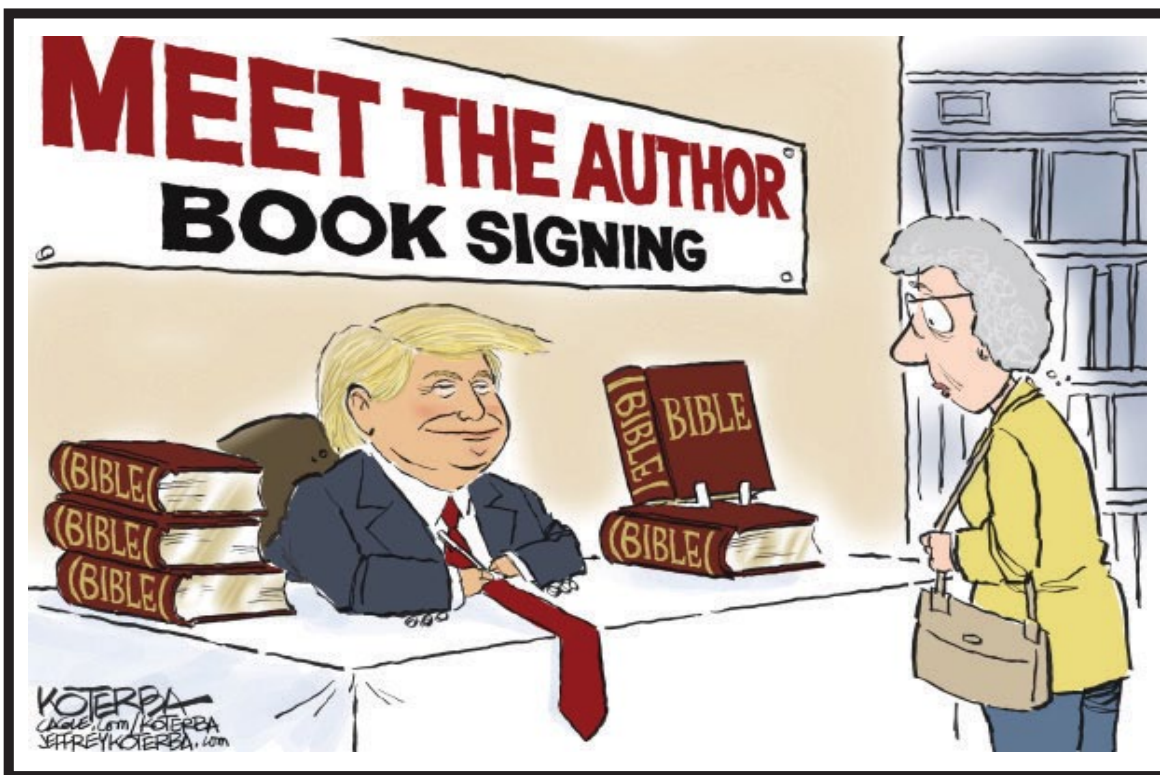
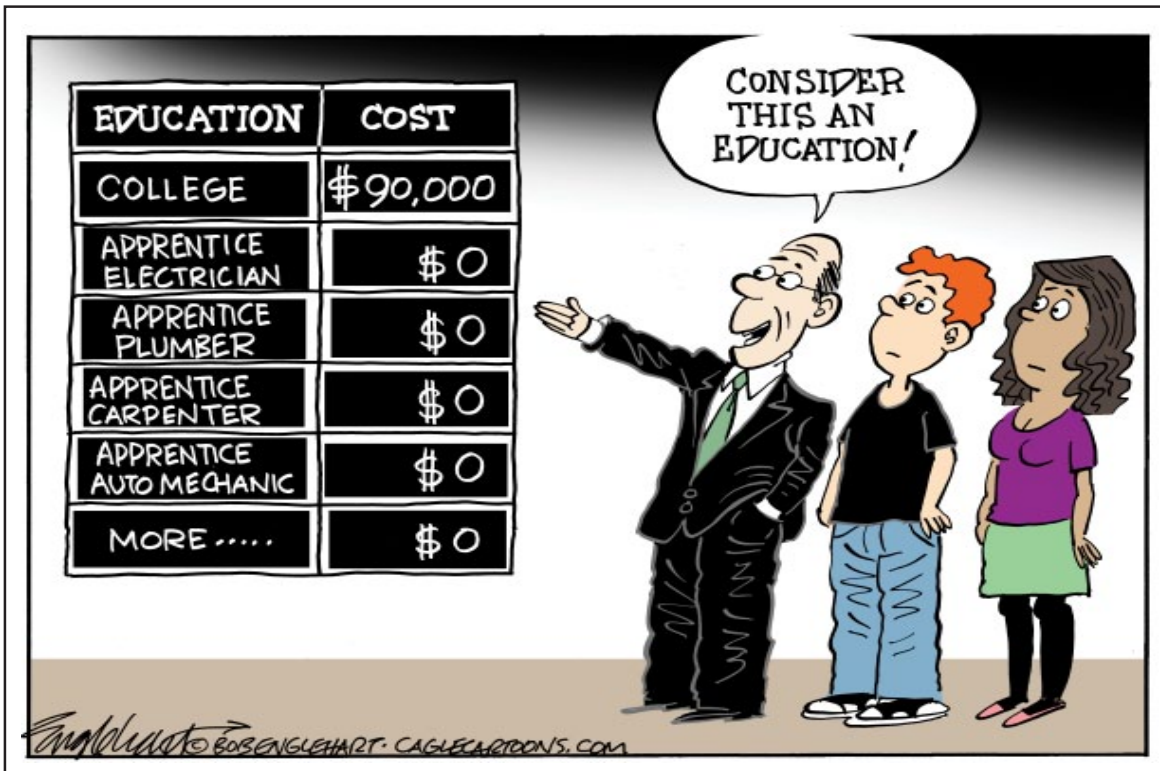
Andy pointed out the MI6 building as we were driving out of London. "It's been blown up a couple times in the movies," he noted, "but they've patched it up good since then."

It was a great tour. Andy also took our group to a secret location along the way. I can't tell you where it is because if I did, MI6 would hunt me down.

That's a multicultural experience I could do without.

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Alexandra Paskhaver is a software engineer and writer. Both jobs require knowing where to stick semicolons, but she's never quite; figured; it; out. For more information, check out her website at <https://apaskhaver.github.io>.



Ways to make gardening easier as you age

Dear Savvy Senior,
 What gardening tips can you offer to older seniors? I love to putter around and work in the garden, but my back and knees have caused me to curtail my gardening activities, which I miss greatly.

- Older Gardner



By Jim Miller

Dear Older,
 There's no doubt that gardening can be hard on an aging body. Joints stiffen up, kneeling for prolonged periods hurts, and bending and reaching can strain muscles. But that doesn't mean you have to give up your hobby. You just need to garden differently, add some special tools and know your limits.

Here are some tips that may help you.

Limber Up

With gardening, good form is very important as well as not overdoing any one activity. A common problem is that gardeners often kneel or squat, putting extra pressure on their knees. Then, to spare their knees, they might stand and bend over for long stretches to weed, dig and plant, straining their back and spine.

To help protect your body, you need to warm up before beginning. Start by stretching, focusing on the legs and lower back. And keep changing positions and activities. Don't spend hours weeding a flowerbed. After 15 minutes of weeding, you should stand

up, stretch, and switch to another activity like pruning the bushes or just take a break.

It's also important that you recognize your physical limitations and don't try to do too much all at once. And, when lifting heavier objects, remember to use your legs to preserve your back. You can do this by keeping the item close to your body and squatting to keep your back as vertical as possible.

Get Better Tools

The right gardening equipment can help too. Kneeling pads can protect knees, and garden seats or stools are both back and knee savers. Lightweight garden carts can make hauling bags of mulch, dirt, plants or other heavy objects much easier. And long-handled gardening and weeding tools can help ease the strain on the back by keeping you in a standing upright position versus bent over.

There are also ergonomic gardening and pruning tools with fatter handles and other design features that can

make lawn and garden activities a little easier. Fiskars and Felco make a number of specialty tools that you can buy online or at local retail stores that sell lawn and garden supplies. Also check out Gardeners.com and RadiusGarden.com, two online stores that sell specialized gardening tools and equipment that are very helpful to older gardeners.

Make Watering Easier

The chore of carrying water or handling a heavy, awkward hose can also be difficult for older gardeners. Some helpful options include lightweight fabric or expandable hoses instead of heavy rubber hoses; soaker or drip hoses that can be snaked throughout the garden; thin coil hoses that can be used on the patio or small areas; a hose caddy and reel for easier hose transport around the yard; and a self-winding hose chest that puts the hose up automatically. There are also a variety of ergonomic watering wands that are lightweight, easy to grip, and reach

those hard-to-get-to plants.

To find these types of watering aids check with your local lawn and garden supplies stores or visit Gardeners.com.

Bring the Garden to You

If your backyard garden has become too much to handle, you should consider elevated garden beds or container gardening – using big pots, window boxes, hanging baskets, barrels or tub planters. This is a much easier way to garden because it eliminates much of the bend and strain of gardening but still provides the pleasure of making things grow.

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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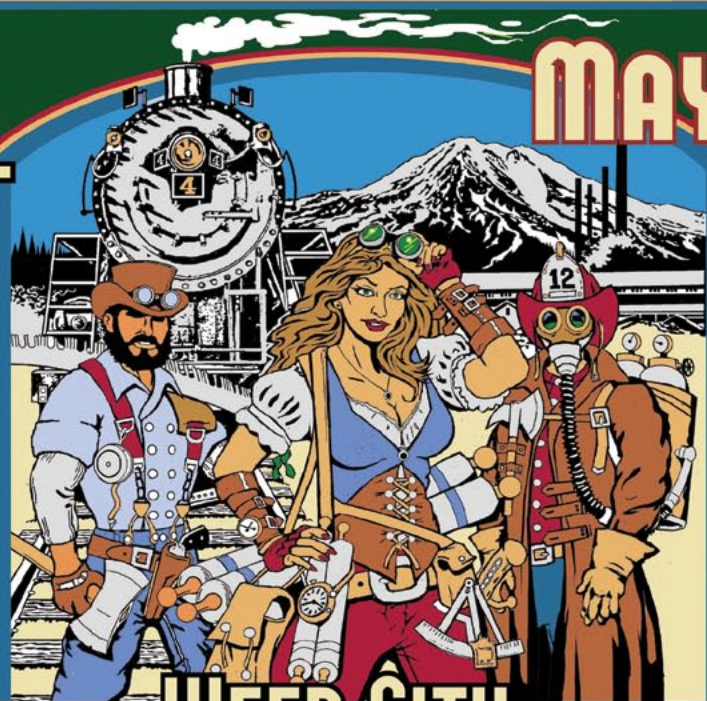
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