

AFTER FIVE

THE NORTH STATE MAGAZINE

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THE NEWS, ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT MONTHLY

ON THE COVER

THE BABE IN DUNSMUIR

This Siskiyou County city is looking at a grant to spruce up its historic ballpark and grandstands where Babe Ruth played an exhibition game in 1924. The field, which hosts the Dunsmuir High baseball and football teams, still stands and looks much as it did back then. Read about The Bambino's historic visit that North State residents still talk about to this day. See page 8

STIMULUS WAVE

During the last cataclysmic recession, California's

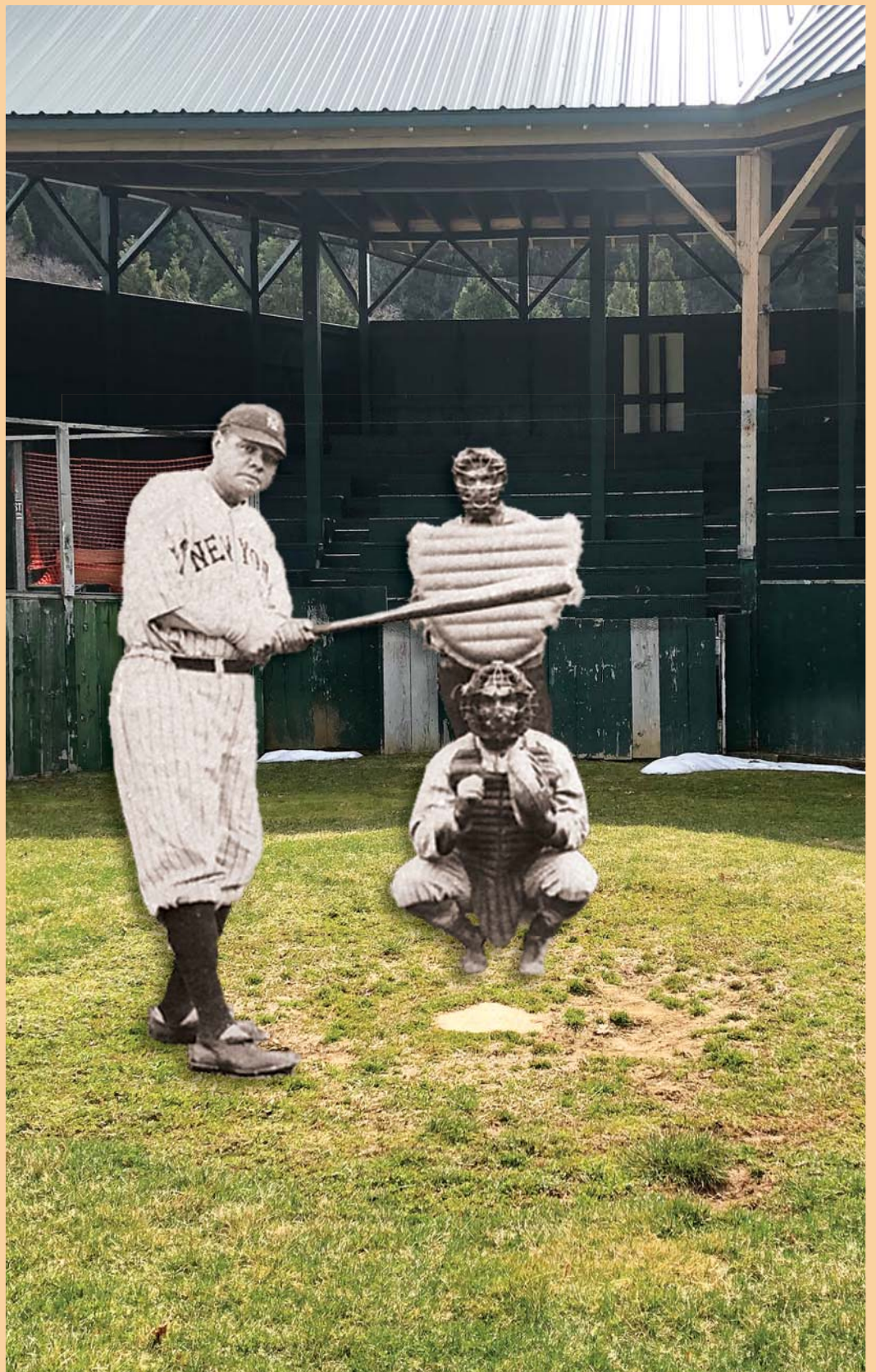


state government was forced to cleave billions from its budget to close an historic deficit. This year, thanks to a very unequal economic downturn and a tax code that relies

on the wealthy, the state is swimming in cash, even during the pandemic. See page 14

FREE PAS CONCERT

The next Redding Performing Arts Society free concert on the PAS YouTube channel is scheduled for 7:30 p.m., April 9, with "This I Gotta Sing" featuring singers Katie Narf and Lizzie Stoxen as they share musical theatre masterpieces spanning the 20th and 21st centuries. See page 2





The Red Pill Collective

Mt. Shasta group releases debut album

Red Pill Collective, a group of musicians based in Mt. Shasta who write and record original music, announced the release of their debut album, "The Red Album," featuring what they say are 10 upbeat tracks blending diverse influences from funk, rock, rap and disco.

Primary songwriters Nikolas Allen and Ryan Bouslaugh started working together in 2019, with both being lifetime musicians with many years' experience in the business. Their motivation no longer based on youthful visions of "making it big," they said they formed a creative alliance based on the joy of producing original music.

As they honed their vision, an upbeat funk rock style emerged that melded their myriad influences into a unique and singular style.

To enhance the songs, RPC brought in local guest musicians, including David Blink, Susan Riley Brown, Brenda Eastman, Anna Gorep and Sulena Sivananda.

"The Red Album" is currently available on all major streaming platforms, including Spotify, Pandora, YouTube, Amazon Music, iTunes and many more. It can also be streamed and purchased as a digital download or CD at the band's website, redpillcollective.com.



Lizzie Stoxen, left, and Katie Narf

Next PAS concert slated April 9

The next Redding Performing Arts Society free concert on the PAS YouTube channel is scheduled for 7:30 p.m., April 9, with "This I Gotta Sing," featuring singers Katie Narf and Lizzie Stoxen as they share musical theatre masterpieces spanning the 20th and 21st centuries.

They'll explore American Songbook standards and selections from on-stage classics such as "Hello, Dolly!," "Les Miserables" and "Chess" to contemporary favorites like "Waitress," "The Last 5 Years" and "Hamilton."

Stoxen is a long-time resident of Redding and an active member of the music and theatre community. She has formal training in classical and jazz vocals as well as piano and percussion, and has worked on- and off-stage with many of Redding's local theatre companies as a performer, music director and costumer. Stoxen is also a proud parent of two budding thespians and teaches drama and choir at Cottonwood Creek Charter

School, as well as voice and piano at her private studio.

Narf holds Bachelor of Fine Arts degrees in Musical Theatre Performance and Music Education from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and has also completed all three levels of training at the CCM Vocal Pedagogy Institute at Shenandoah Conservatory. She has worked on several productions at the Cascade Theatre, both onstage and as a vocal director, and has recently worked as vocal director and performer for Riverfront Playhouse. She is the current lead voice teacher/head of the voice department at Harris School of Music and also teaches music at a local school.

This free concert will be available forever on the PAS YouTube channel. However, donations are greatly appreciated and can be made through PayPal or by check to: PAS, P.O. Box 990904, Redding, CA 96099.

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'Make Mom's Day' and support two non-profits

Mother's Day is May 9 and KIXE PBS and Shasta Library Foundation invite you to "Make Mom's Day" with a three-course meal kit for four people and fun questions to connect with mom. It's all for \$135 and you'll be supporting two local non-profits.

Each dinner kit comes with everything you need. You'll also get step-by-step instructions to follow along with KIXE's first local cooking show, "Make Mom's Day." The show will feature Barbara Cervantes of BC Catering and Erika Jones from the Shasta Library Foundation who will show you how to put together the most delicious appetizer of bruschetta and garlic butter toast for mom to start.

For the entrée, join Chef Che Stedman from Moonstone Bistro as he demonstrates how to slice and dice your way through his secret Chicken Alfredo recipe - all from scratch, including the pasta.

Cheers to mom with a custom labeled, one of a kind (just like mom!) full bodied Tempranillo wine from Churn Creek Cellars (limited quantities available for \$15).



Finally, spend s'more time with mom enjoying homemade s'mores to end the evening.

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The "Make Mom's Day" cooking show will air on KIXE PBS May 8 at 4 p.m. and 8 p.m. and again on May 9 at 5 p.m. It will also be available on-demand via Facebook and YouTube.

Go to www.kixe.org/events or text MakeMomsDay to 76278 between March 22 and April 30 to secure your Make Mom's Day experience.

For more information, email Bethany Rau at brau@kixe.org or Tara Faires at tfaires@kixe.org.



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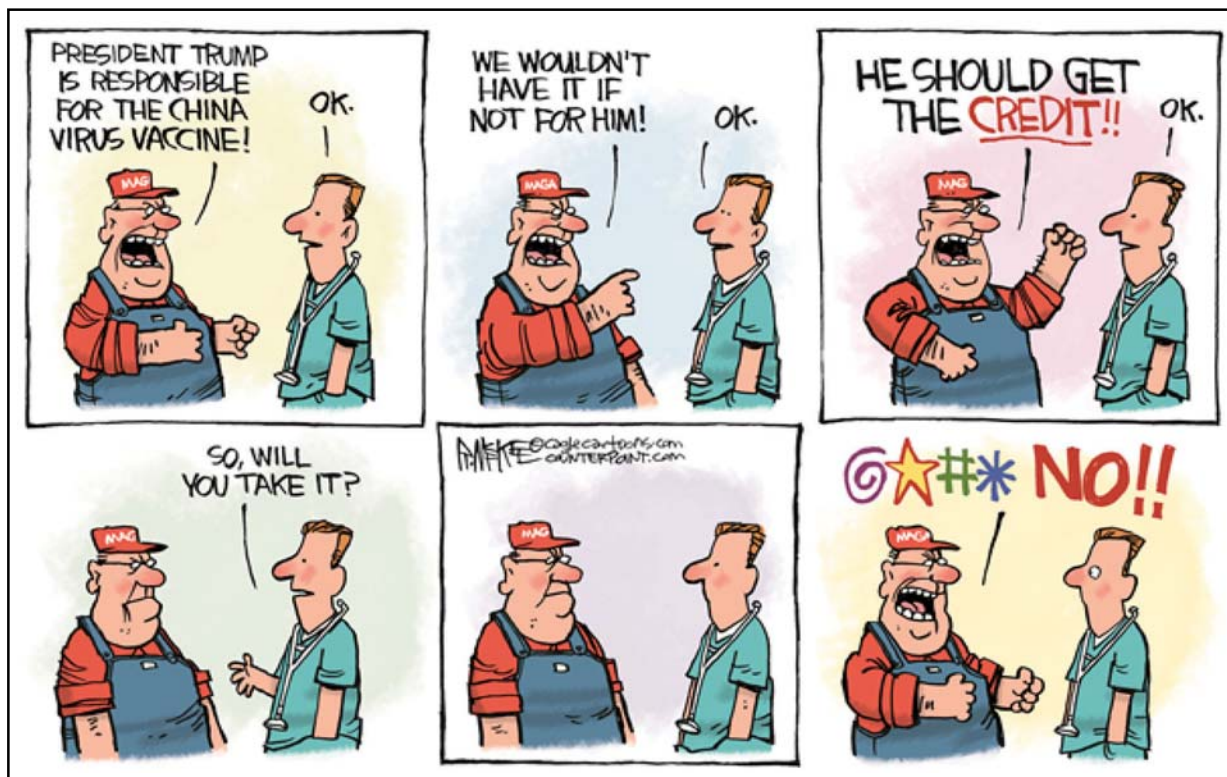
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(With apologies to Dr. Seuss)

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AFTER FIVE

The North State Magazine

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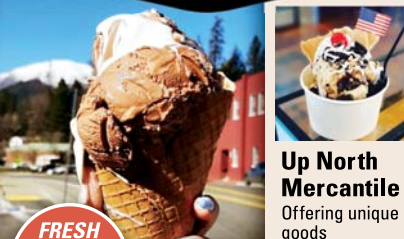



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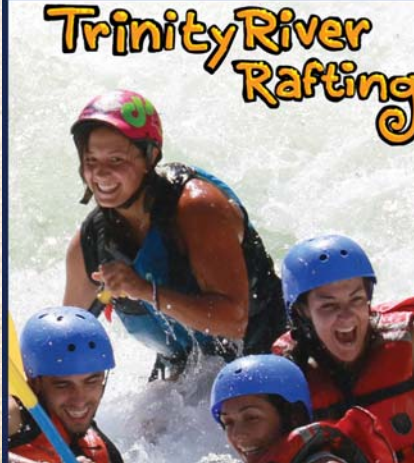
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Cheese Fondue

By CARRIE CLASSON

It's our anniversary, and Peter and I will be celebrating, like everyone has this past year, the best we are able.

We have not yet won the vaccine lottery. I recently received a note from the health department that basically said, "Don't get your hopes up." Newspaper columnists are not, apparently, considered essential workers and, of course, I am not. Meanwhile, we continue to visit my sister-in-law, Lori, whose health remains precarious.

So our anniversary celebration this year will not be spent going to a restaurant or a hot spring or a hotel in town. Instead, we are having cheese fondue on the patio.

Facebook (which knows everything) knew it was our anniversary and made a video of Peter and me. Since we rarely take pictures at home, all the pictures were taken somewhere far away. It was surprising, being reminded of all the places we have been, all the occasions we have celebrated in the last six years.

My closet is filled with dresses and skirts that have not seen the light of day for a year. They look like artifacts from another era. I won't be wearing a dress today either. But we are having cheese fondue.

The sun is out, but it is still March, so we'll dress warm. Peter will heat up the cheese in a little electric pot. And for dessert, we'll have pumpkin cake with his mother's burnt butter frosting. I think it will be a memorable anniversary—and memories are tricky things, in my experience.

Sometimes I feel as if I've forgotten nearly everything I've ever done. I am so caught up in the present moment and the present day. Even 10 years ago seems like another lifetime. In many ways, it is.

I realize I am becoming more and more like my grandmother.

One evening, toward the end of her life, I watched her listen to a long-winded story her brother told about the perfect baked potato. My Great-Uncle John was looking at the potato he had just been served and reminiscing about what a good potato should look like, how they used to make them in a Chicago restaurant, decades ago.

I could see my grandmother's growing impatience with this story about long-ago potatoes, and finally she burst out, "John! That potato is 50 years old!"

My grandmother lived a long time, and I believe she enjoyed most of it, in large part because she didn't spend much time on old potatoes.

Life changes and people move on, and that's not a bad thing. Living in the past doesn't make the best use of my brain or my limited time on earth. In general, I'm satisfied with the few scattered and fragmented memories I've hung onto.

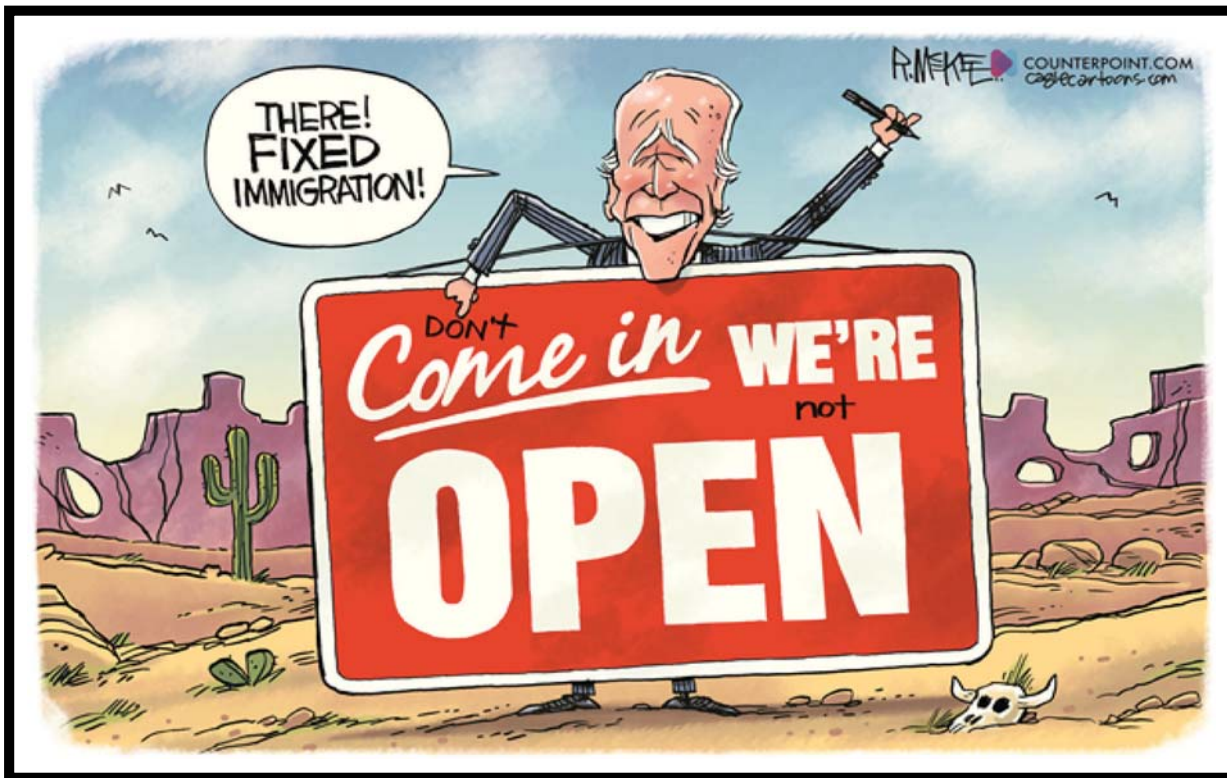
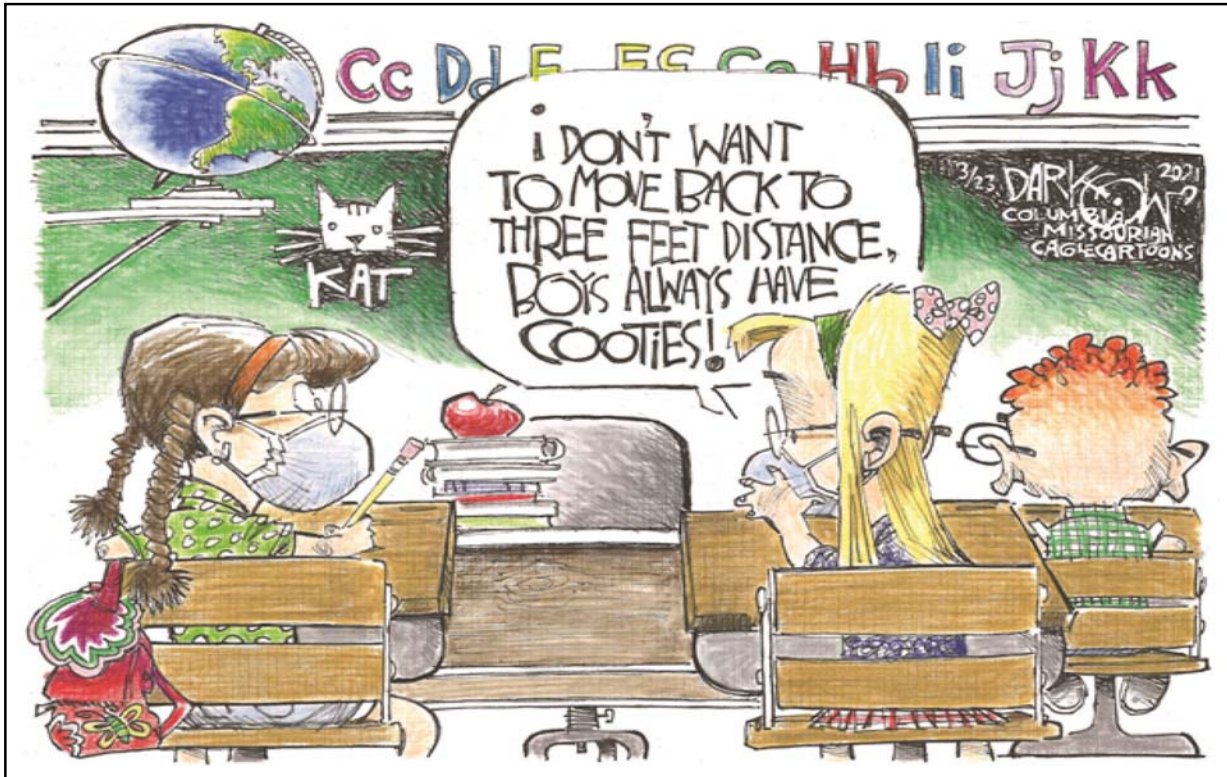
But this past year will be one I will remember.

There will be all the years that happened before, and there will be this year. We will remember this anniversary for being the one we didn't go out (at least, not farther than the patio). It's been the year of small celebrations. It's been the year of cheese fondue.

Sometime later this year, I will wear a fancy dress somewhere. I will put on shoes with heels, and I'm sure it will feel odd, having lived in the equivalent of pajamas all year. We'll go out, and we'll see people and eat in a restaurant. We have all that to look forward to.

But today we are having cheese fondue.

And I'll remember this anniversary better than most because it was different. And because we celebrated the best we were able.



NEWS of the WEIRD

Two weeks after a plea deal fell through in connection with a 2019 attempt to stowaway on a flight at Chicago's O'Hare International Airport, Marilyn Hartman, 69, was arrested and charged with trespassing March 16 as she attempted to sneak onto another flight at O'Hare, the Associated Press reported.

At the time of her 2019 arrest, Hartman was on probation after having bypassed security in January 2018 and boarded a flight from Chicago to London without a ticket.

The Cook County Sheriff's Department says it plans to seek a felony escape charge for Hartman.



Einstein Cafe, an upscale dessert chain with outlets across the Gulf Arab states, started a fad by selling its thick, milky drinks in plastic baby bottles, complete with nipples.

The Associated Press reported the cafe was inspired by photos of trendy bottles on social media, and the idea was an instant hit.

People lined up at Einstein stores, they "took photos, they had fun, they remembered their childhood," said Younes Molla, CEO of the chain, but others "were so angry they said horrible things."

In Dubai, Kuwait and Bahrain, the government cracked down on the new cafe offerings, saying the bottles violate the countries' customs and traditions; in Oman, citizens were asked to report sightings of the baby bottle confections to a consumer protection hotline.



Laura Rose Carroll, 50, and her daughter, Emily Rose Grover, 17, were arrested in Pensacola, Florida, after an investigation by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement found the duo had allegedly stuffed the ballot box with votes for Emily for homecoming queen last fall.

Suspicions were raised when the Escambia County School District reported illegal accessing of hundreds of its students' digital accounts.

Authorities said Carroll, an assistant elementary school principal, had access to the district student information system, and investigators traced unauthorized entries into the system to Carroll's cell-phone and computers, where nearly 250 votes were cast.

Fox News reported that investigators also said students reported being told by Grover



HILBERT • NEWS OF THE WEIRD • APR/21

Shannon Stevens, along with her brother Erik and his girlfriend, snowmobiled to Erik's yurt in the backcountry near Haines, Alaska, and got the scare of a lifetime when she was attacked from below by a bear in an outhouse, the Associated Press reported. Erik heard his sister's screams and went out to investigate, opening the toilet seat to find "a bear face ... just looking right back up through the hole, right at me," he said. He shut the lid and ran back to the yurt, where they treated Shannon's wound with a first aid kit and determined it wasn't serious. Alaska Department of Fish and Game Wildlife Management biologist Carl Koch said the bear probably swiped at her with its paw, rather than biting her. "She could be the only person on Earth that this has ever happened to," Koch speculated.

about her mother's activity.

Each of them was charged with offenses against computers and other cybercrimes, along with conspiracy.



Raffaela Spone, 50, was arrested in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, after prosecutors say she created "deepfake" videos and photographs of at least three girls on her daughter's cheerleading squad in an apparent attempt to embarrass them and force them off the team.

Prosecutors said Spone allegedly sent the manipulated

images to the girls – shown drinking, smoking and naked – anonymously and suggested they kill themselves, The Philadelphia Inquirer reported.

Parents of one of recipients contacted police, and detectives traced the IP address where the messages originated to Spone's home.

Investigators believe Spone's daughter was unaware of what her mother was doing.

Andrew Almer of Fargo, North Dakota, has flown an American flag from the bal-

cony of his condominium for two years, but the condo association is now demanding the flag be taken down because it creates too much noise flapping in the wind.

"You've got to be kidding me," Almer told reported KVLV-TV. "It's not rude, it's not nasty, it's the American flag. ... It's not coming down anytime soon."



Vietnam veteran Tom Garvey, 78, of Ambler, Pennsylvania, has released a new memoir, not about his service in Southeast Asia, but about

the "secret apartment" he maintained for two years in an empty concession stand in Philadelphia's Veterans Stadium, once home to both the Phillies and the Eagles, reported The Philadelphia Inquirer.

From 1979 to 1981, Garvey lived in an "off-the-wall South Philly version of the Phantom of the Opera," he said, furnishing the apartment with a bed, sink, refrigerator, stereo, coffee maker, hot plate and seating for guests, who included players' wives waiting for their husbands after games.

Leftover AstroTurf served as the carpeting.

Cousin Terry Nilon said being in Garvey's apartment, located literally in leftfield, felt like "Vet stadium was in his living room."



Andreas Flaten of Peachtree City, Georgia, quit his job at Walker Luxury Autoworks, visibly annoying his boss, he told WGCL-TV, but he was promised his final \$915 paycheck would be paid within two months.

When the check didn't come, Flaten contacted the Georgia Department of Labor, and one night four months after he quit, 500 pounds of oily pennies were anonymously dumped in his driveway, presumably totaling \$915.

Flaten has been storing them in a wheelbarrow, but they can't be cashed until they are cleaned.



Work had begun on the small bungalow retired banker Charles Pole, 81, of Wiveliscombe, England, was building for himself on his property when excavators unearthed the remains of a 13th-century bishop's palace, simultaneously solving a local mystery and bringing construction to a halt.

Historians had been looking for the site, once home to bishops of Bath and Wells, for 200 years, and a spokesperson for the South West Heritage Trust described it to the Somerset County Gazette as a "significant find."

In the meantime, though, Pole is stuck with the bill.

"The cost of the investigation is going to cost me around (\$26,000)," he said. Building will continue after the site is protected and covered over again.



Drag queen Spar-Kelly and her neighbors in St. Johns, Florida, are tired of parents parking along their street dur-

—Please See Page 11

When The Bambino came to Dunsmuir

Siskiyou County city looking at grant to spruce up historic ballpark and grandstands where Babe Ruth played

By Aaron Williams

For 145 years, Major League Baseball has captured America's attention. It's been played through World Wars, scandals and, now, two global pandemics.

First pitch of the 2021 season happened this month as Northern California favorites San Francisco Giants and Oakland A's set out on the six-month journey to win the World Series.

And while the Bay Area is as close as Major League Baseball gets to far Northern California, the area from Butte County north to the Oregon border and from Susanville in the east to Eureka and Arcata in the west has a rich history of semi-professional and lumber mill town teams.

The North State is home to dozens of former Major Leaguers, including John Strohmayer, Rick Bosetti, Kyle Lohse, Mark Parent, Bill Plummer and Buck Martinez.

But it's one town in particular, Dunsmuir, which might have had the closest brush with baseball superstardom when Babe Ruth visited the tiny Siskiyou County town in October 1924 to play an exhibition game at the town's field.

The field, which hosts the Dunsmuir High baseball and football teams, still stands and looks much as it did back then. There's a plaque commemorating the 1924 visit and the City hopes to obtain grant funding to help restore the historic grandstands and field.

Ron McCloud, owner of Dunsmuir Hardware and member of the city's historical society, wrote about the famous visit and exhibition game in his piece "The Babe Ruth Story" he wrote for the Siskiyou County Historical Society's book on Dunsmuir's history.

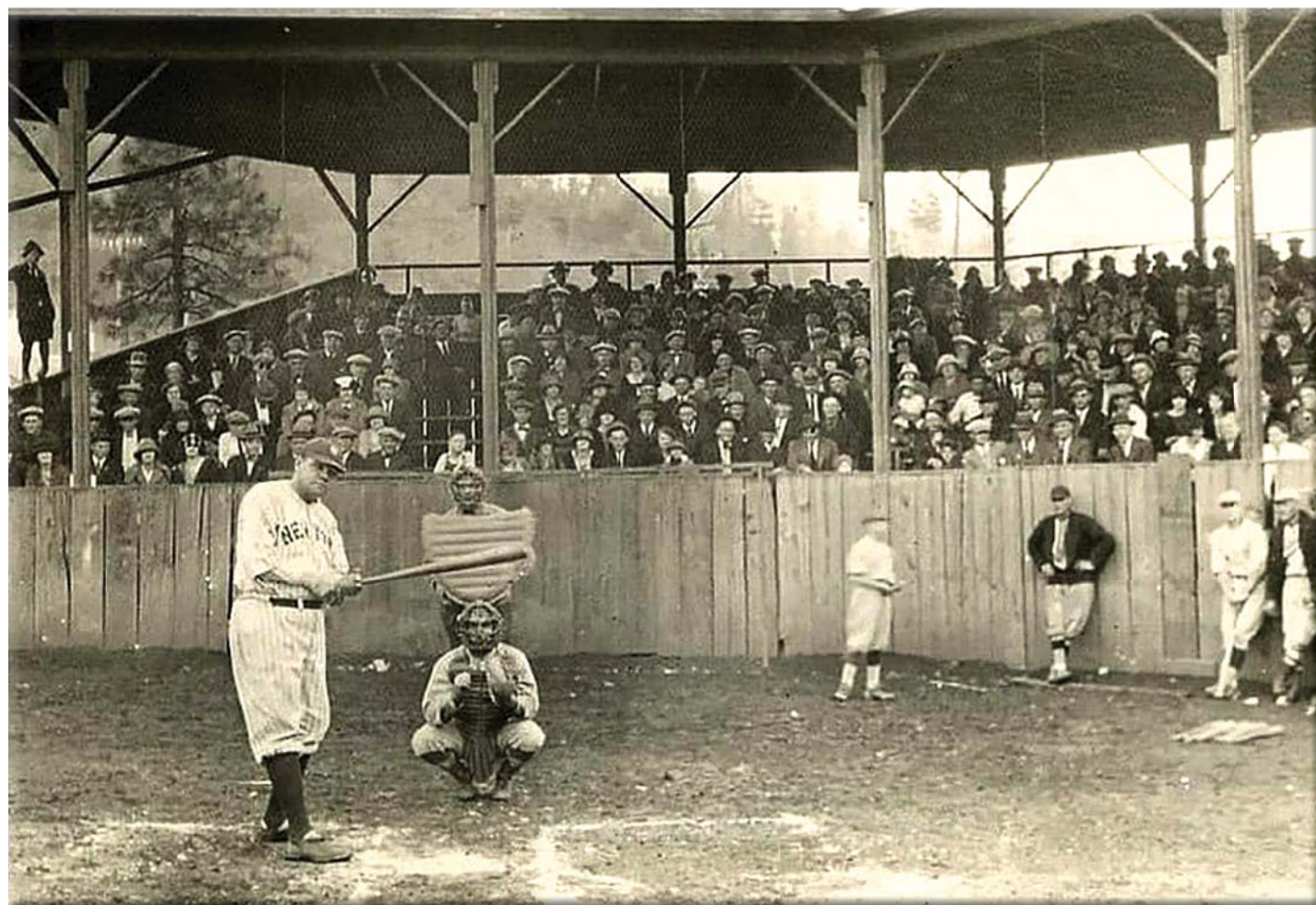
"Babe Ruth was a superhero and I wanted to know what transpired and how he came to Dunsmuir," McCloud said. "It's certainly something Dunsmuir is proud of and it's a topic of discussion."

The 1924 season was a bit of a disappointment for the Yankees after winning pennants in 1921, '22 and '23 with their first World Series title in 1923.

Personally, Ruth had a great year, winning his one and only batting title that year with a .378 average. He also led the Majors with 46 home runs, runs scored (143), total bases (391), walks (141) and his 124 RBI were second best to Goose Goslin.

But the Bronx Bombers fell two games shy of winning the pennant to the Washington Senators.

With the Senators and New York Giants squaring off in the Fall Classic, Ruth, fellow Yankee Bob Meusel and Ruth's manager Christy Walsh set out on a barnstorming baseball tour out West. The tour included 15 scheduled stops, including Spokane, Tacoma, Seattle, Portland, San Francisco, Stockton and Los Angeles. Major League Baseball hadn't migrated west of the Mississippi River and fans were always anxious



Above, Babe Ruth at the plate in Dunsmuir in 1924 in a photo taken by a local photographer, Paul J. Standard. In a 2019 Leland's Auction, a Real Photo Postcard of that shot (below) had a starting bid of \$1,500. It sold for \$19,560. Right, the grandstands today, looking much the same as it did nearly 100 years ago. These two photos were used to create the composite photo on the cover.



to see the stars they listened to on the radio.

Meusel would have been an attraction to see in his own right. He would later be among the 1927 Yankees, including Ruth, to be dubbed Murderers' Row where he batted fifth behind Ruth and Lou Gehrig; he was an outfielder known for his strong throwing arm; and in the 1925 season following his Dunsmuir appearance, it was he - not Ruth - who would lead the American League in home runs with 33, as well as a league leading 134 RBI and 79 extra base hits.

Dunsmuir, at the time, was a baseball town along with many of the smaller railroad and lumber towns in Northern California. As McCloud wrote, "In those days before television, baseball was great entertainment and

the rivalry between Dunsmuir, Mount Shasta, Weed and McCloud drew fans to the games."

"Baseball held people's interest," McCloud said.

When Dunsmuir's Frank Talmadge realized the Ruth barnstorming tour had stops in Portland and San Francisco, he surmised the party would pass through Dunsmuir, as it was the lone route between the two cities.

McCloud wrote about the plan hatched by Talmadge to get Ruth to stop on his way into California, but Walsh, Ruth's agent, wanted \$1,000.

"Christy Walsh wanted \$1,000 for Babe and his entourage to stop and spend time in Dunsmuir and Frank Talmadge persuaded the Dunsmuir Lions Club to come up with the money," McCloud wrote. "Unfortunately, the

Lions could only come up with \$300 so Talmadge himself donated the balance. And the deal was made."

Ruth's entourage arrived in Dunsmuir late on a Tuesday evening with the game scheduled for Wednesday. Mayor E.J. Cornish declared a "semi-holiday" and businesses shuttered for the game.

Tickets were reportedly \$1.10 for adults and a quarter for children as Ruth joined the Dunsmuir team with Meusel on the Weed nine, each of them playing first base for their respective teams.

"There is a story that Babe Ruth spoke to the pitcher on the other team and suggested that he pitch right over the plate because 'Folks didn't come here to see me walk.'" wrote McCloud.

Legend has it that Ruth supposedly hit a 600-foot home run that struck a tall tree at the nearby Cave Springs Resort,

which had opened the previous year and still exists today.

“During the game, Babe hit two home runs, one of which flew all the way to the (resort) and was later certified at 604 feet,” McCloud wrote. “Babe’s team won the game that became legend.”

The final score: Babe Ruth and Dunsmuir 8, Bob Meusel and Weed 7. Ruth was 3-for-4 with two home runs. Meusel also hit a home run.

McCloud said keeping the legend of Babe Ruth in Dunsmuir alive is important as history fades and life seems to speed up.

“It’s so long ago that you can’t ask anyone about it,” he said. “There is no one left with a first-person account or even a second-hand story.”

Newspaper accounts of the day chronicled the visit.

• The San Francisco Examiner had a photo two days after the game with the caption: “It made no difference to the King of Swat whether there were only 5,000 fans on hand at Dunsmuir Wednesday, he worked just as hard to please them as though he were performing before the eyes of 60,000 at the Yankee stadium.”

• The Sacramento Bee wrote: “Baseball fans of this section who have followed Babe Ruth’s long distance hitting proclivities were not disappointed yesterday, when the star appeared in an exhibition game here. The Babe cracked out two home runs, both of which cleared the center field fence and went for a distance of 500 feet. Ruth led the grand march at a dance in the evening.”

• And the Dunsmuir News opined: “If any doubt ever existed in the minds of baseball fans of Siskiyou County regarding Babe Ruth’s widely-heralded ability to hit ‘em over the fence, that doubt was ‘ruthlessly’ knocked into a cocked hat Wednesday when the ‘King of Swat’ gave an exhibition of hitting in the baseball plaque here that provided thrill after thrill for the fans.”

The Dunsmuir stop became even more memorable by an iconic photo a local photographer, Paul J. Standard, took of Ruth standing at the plate. With Meusel off to the right leaning up against the grandstands, Ruth, the catcher, the umpire and all of the fans in the grandstands appear to be looking directly at Standard, seemingly waiting to get the signal from the photographer that it was okay to exhale again. In a 2019 Leland’s Auction, a Real Photo Postcard of that photo had a starting bid of \$1,500. It sold for \$19,560.

During their Dunsmuir stop, Ruth and Meusel were wined and dined and taken on a fishing expedition on the Klamath River where they reportedly caught two steelhead.

In a letter to Reva Coon and her Dunsmuir baseball player husband, “Bones” Coon, Babe told them: “To everybody (and that means everybody) in Dunsmuir, Calif., we don’t know yet how to tell you what a wonderful time we had in Dunsmuir. When it comes to beautiful girls, wonderfully fine fellows, and the real two-fisted spirit of California — little Dunsmuir gave us more laughs, more hospitality, more thrills, and more things to remember than any place between Broadway and Shasta.”



PHOTO / Courtesy Siskiyou County Historical Society

Above, Bob Meusel and Babe Ruth, standing center, with local Siskiyou County players after the game. Below left, legend has it that Ruth...supposedly...allegedly...hit a 604-foot home run that may have struck one of the large trees seen in the far distance of right field in the area of Cave Springs Resort, which was a year old back then and is still in business today. Below right, Ruth and Meusel with Ruth’s agent Christy Walsh (center) and two local players known only as “Painter” on the left and “E. Wells” on the right. All three photos face the same general right field direction.



City Seeks Grant to Restore Facility

While the turn-of-the-last-century field and stands still exist today – and many are amazed at how little it seems to have changed in nearly 100 years – the facility is starting to show its age.

Mike Rodriguez, the city’s Recreation and Parks District administrator, said Dunsmuir is in the process of applying for a grant to secure funds to spruce up the grandstands, the field and other things.

“It’s one of the few grandstands remaining in the North State and with its history, we’re looking to preserve it,” he said.

The grant would finance new boarding for the grandstands, seats, and a ceiling and concession stand, in addition to work needed to make it ADA compliant.

“It’s historically significant,” McCloud said. “People are always asking where it is and if it’s the original field.”

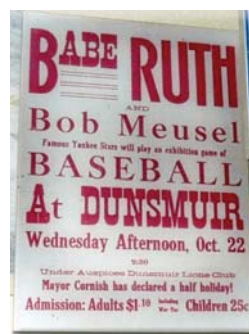
He said keeping alive the Ruthian legacy is important.

“I don’t know if the young kids feel a kinship when they play there, but it’s pretty cool to think you’re at the same plate where Babe Ruth once stood,” he said.

Ron Harrington contributed to this article.



Above, about the only time The Babe seems to smile during the 1924 Dunsmuir photo ops is this shot of him with some local unidentified girls. Below left, Mike Rodriguez, administrator for the Dunsmuir Recreation and Parks District, standing next to the plaque that marked the event and was dedicated in 1986. Below center, a photo of the poster announcing the event that Rodriguez said someone had seen out of the area and emailed to the city of Dunsmuir. Below right, the shower that Ruth supposedly used after the game. It is located at the back of the grandstands on the third base side...and it looks like it hasn’t been used in 100 years.



Additional help, information and photos provided by those with the Siskiyou County Historical Society, Siskiyou County Museum, Dunsmuir Recreation and Parks Department and College of the Siskiyous library.

NEWS of the WEIRD

-From Page 7

ing school pickup to avoid the traffic at the nearby Creekside High School.

So, she dressed in her finest and for three days held up a simple sign that read, "THIS IS NOT STUDENT PICKUP, HONEY."

"If what it takes is just me standing here and telling people to move along, I'll be a diva and I'll tell someone to move right along," she told WJXT-TV.

Her efforts paid off: A St. Johns County Sheriff's deputy showed up to

patrol the street, and plans are being made to install new "no parking" signs.

Roger Broadstone, 67, was at home in Twining, Michigan, when state police officers arrived to investigate allegations of \$1,500 worth of merchandise purchased with a stolen credit card, but he refused to let them in without a search warrant, WJRT-TV reported.

When the troopers returned with the warrant, they found the illegally purchased items inside the house, but

they also found that Broadstone had barricaded himself inside and allegedly set a booby trap and other items designed to harm the officers.

Broadstone was charged with two counts related to the credit card transaction, and 16 counts related to the confrontation with authorities, including five counts of attempted murder and four counts of resisting police. He was being held on a \$1.125 million bond.

The Staten Island Zoo is weathering a storm of controversy over the prediction made by its resident groundhog, Staten Island Chuck, on Feb. 2 – an

annual event at the zoo.

Chuck popped up on a Facebook "livestream" at the designated hour, on the designated day, but something seemed ... off.

After hours of accumulating snow in the New York area, the New York Post reported, Chuck was seen to emerge into bright sunlight with no snow on the ground, his handlers wearing sweat-shirts.

"So there ya have it, folks, we're gonna have an early spring," announced zoo executive director Ken Mitchell.

Viewers weren't fooled, one com-
-Please See Page 12

Antiquing Guide

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North State Visitors Guide

NEWS of the WEIRD

-From Page 10
menting, "Welp this isn't live."

Previous Groundhog Day celebrations at the zoo have also raised a ruckus.

In 2014, a stand-in groundhog named Charlotte died after being dropped by Mayor Bill de Blasio, and in 2009 Chuck bit Mayor Mike Bloomberg's finger.

Researchers have solved the mystery of how bare-nosed wombats, native to southeastern Australia, produce poop in cubes, reports the International Business Times.

Wildlife ecologist Scott Carver of the University of Tasmania is lead author on a study, published in the journal *Soft Matter*, that details the particular inner workings of the wombat's digestive tract that produce the square-shaped dung.

"This ability ... is unique in the animal kingdom," Carver said. "Our research found that ... you really can fit a square peg through a round hole."

Italian police arrested an unnamed 36-year-old in Naples on suspicion of receiving stolen goods and found a 500-year-old copy of Leonardo da Vinci's "Salvatore Mundi," a painting they returned to the museum it belonged to, surprising museum officials, who had no idea it had been missing.

The painting is part of the Doma Museum collection at the San Domenico Maggiore church in Naples, where the room it had hung in "has not been open for three months," Naples prosecutor Giovanni Melillo told *The Guardian*.

The copy was made by Giacomo Alibrandi in the early 1500s; da Vinci's original painting sold in 2017 for a record-breaking \$450 million at auction and hasn't been seen in public since.

Watertown, Massachusetts, recently installed new parking meters with updated technology to make payment easier, but the city is instead fielding complaints from residents who say the meters are too tall to use.

"I'm 5'7," and I have to do a little tip-toe reach," Marianne Iagco told *WBZ-TV*, which reported that the meters measure about 5 feet, 6 inches high.

Assistant Town Manager Steve Magoon said public works employees will be lowering the meters to 48 inches in the weeks to come.

"It's actually sort of refreshing to have a problem of slightly shorter stature than unemployment, COVID-19, no food and no money," commented optimistic resident Ken Pershing.

Retired Navy meteorologist Paul Grisham, 91, of San Carlos, California, was reunited with the leather wallet he lost 53 years ago when his 13-month tour in Antarctica ended and he returned home without it.

The wallet had been found behind a

locker during renovations at McMurdo Station and made its way back to him through the weeks-long efforts of a group of amateur detectives working to track him down.

"I was just blown away," Grisham told *The San Diego Union-Tribune*.

The billfold still contained Grisham's Navy ID, driver's license and an assortment of other items, including a recipe for homemade Kahlua, money order receipts from his poker winnings and a set of instructions on what to do in case of an attack. It did not contain any money because there had been nothing to buy at the station.

Recompose, a company in Kent, Washington, now offers an environmentally friendly alternative to traditional burial – human composting.

The *Seattle Times* reported that on Dec. 20, the first bodies were "laid in" – placed in steel cylinders full of soil, where decedents rest for 30 days, covered with wood chips and straw.

After that, they're moved to a "curing bin" to finish releasing carbon dioxide, and then remains can be returned to family or donated to an ecological restoration project near Vancouver.

According to Recompose, the "finished soil is very similar to the topsoil bought at a local nursery."

"This is a very controlled process, completely driven by microbes," explained CEO Katrina Spade.

"It's fueled by plant material and monitored in a very rigorous way." The entire process costs \$5,500 and includes an optional service.

Lisa Boothroyd, 48, of Rugby in Warwickshire, England, got a shock when the handful of popping candies she ate turned out to be small novelty fireworks used as noisemakers instead.

The box of Fun Snaps was shelved among other candies at her local Costcutter store, she told the *Daily Mail*, and the packaging was similar, but the result was painful: Boothroyd reported chemical burns on her lips and gums and a cracked tooth.

"That moment I crunched down was terrifying," Boothroyd said. "I felt explosions in my mouth followed by burning pain."

A spokesperson for Costcutter said the Fun Snaps would be "(removed) from the confectionery section with immediate effect."

A woman in Cajeme, Mexico, identified only as Leonora R., faces charges of domestic violence after repeatedly stabbing her husband when she found photos of him having sex with a younger, thinner woman on his phone, according to police.

Local media reported the husband was eventually able to disarm his wife and clarify that it was HER in the photos, which were taken when they were dating.

The *New York Daily News* reported that police responding to neighbors' calls for help arrived and arrested her.

Japanese entrepreneur Shota Ishida, 30, has zeroed in on a way to relieve the anxiety felt by a narrow niche of people: the roughly 1% of the population, he says, who worry about body odor.

"It's something they can't bring up with friends or family," he told *CBS News*, so they turn to his company, Odorate, for a scientific analysis to determine whether they are emitting offensive odors.

Customers create a smell sample by wearing a plain white T-shirt enhanced with odor-absorbing activated charcoal for 24 hours, then mail it to Ishida's lab north of Tokyo.

For about \$150, Ishida will subject the sample to GC-MS analysis (a technology used to identify unknown chemicals) and produce a report, which can include such descriptions as "old-age smell" or "onions starting to rot."

He says about half of his customers are given the all-clear, with no obvious offensive odors. "Getting the facts is a huge relief for (clients)," he said.

In a first for paleontologists, the perfectly preserved anus of a dinosaur has been found in China.

Psittacosaurus, a Cretaceous-period relative of the Triceratops, was about the size of a dog, and researcher Jakob Vinther of the University of Bristol in the United Kingdom described the discovery as "unique" to *Live Science*.

"It's like a Swiss Army knife of excretory openings," used for pooping, peeing, breeding and egg laying. It was not clear to the researchers whether the dinosaur was male or female.

Trevor Savok, 20, is suspected of stealing underwear and AirPods from a group of young women staying at a Las Vegas area hotel and leaving behind a note illustrated with a hand-drawn heart in one of their bags reading, "Text me if you want your panties back," according to court documents.

The women contacted Savok, who said he would return the underwear if they sent pictures of their private parts, *KTNV-TV* reported.

Police arrested Savok, who worked at the hotel, and are asking the public's help in finding more possible victims.

Monica Green noticed a few things out of order when she returned to her home in Rockhampton, Queensland, Australia: The back door was open, the air conditioner was running and a half-cooked meal of chicken nuggets was left in her kitchen.

Green called police, who discovered an attic opening was partially removed, but instead of finding someone hiding up there, they determined someone had been living there, perhaps for some time, *News.com.au* reported.

"I felt shocked, terrified, scared," said Green, a mother of three children. "Being alone in the home scares me."

Green said she had noticed food missing and her security camera disabled in the days before the discovery, but she thought they were just coincidences or her imagination. Police have not caught the intruder.

The Monroe Township (Michigan) Fire Department launched a rescue mission after receiving a call about a goose or duck possibly injured and in distress on the frozen River Raisin.

Firefighters suited up and headed out on the ice, *WXYZ-TV* reported, but realized upon closer inspection that the bird was just a hunting decoy.

"It ended up being a good training session, actually," said Chief Mark Cherney. "In the end, we can sleep well at night. A bird is not suffering."

Police in Rome, New York, responding to an animal cruelty complaint, arrived at a home to find a man cooking a canine on an outdoor grill, police said.

The unnamed man cooperated with police, saying the animal was a coyote – which would be legal in New York, as hunting and trapping the canines is allowed with a license, *WNBC-TV* reported.

Animal control officers took the carcass to Cornell University for testing to determine its species.

Authorities who pulled over a pickup truck in Elsberry, Missouri, soon discovered the vehicle had been stolen, *KMOV-TV* reported, so they headed to the owner's home, where they found skeletal remains in another vehicle in the garage and a ransacked house.

Lincoln County Sheriff Rick Harrell said the body may have been there since last summer and "a group of criminal opportunists ... had just ransacked the residence and taken many items. We've recovered stolen vehicles, stolen firearms and tens of thousands of dollars in other related items."

The scavengers would have had to walk right past the body for months as they removed items, he added.

Prosecutors are working to bring charges against 25 suspects, and there may be more, authorities said. Investigators have not yet identified the remains or determined exactly when the person died.

Convicted bank robber and career criminal Michael Jauernik, 71, received a sentence of more than 12 years in prison in Germany, but managed to stall his incarceration by delivering a five-day-long closing statement that included anecdotes about his career in crime and details about his fitness routine.

Twenty hours into the soliloquy, the judge finally cut him off, saying she wished she had done so earlier in light of his "excessive digressions," *The Guardian* reported.

Jauernik, who wore sunglasses throughout his trial, told the court, "I am more intelligent and clever than any employee of the criminal police agency, that much is sure."

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Gov. and legislators have lots of money to spend, few strings attached

The federal coronavirus relief package gives a \$26 billion windfall to California. Business groups, doctors and activists all want their share.

By Ben Christopher
Calmatters.org

It's a good kind of problem to have.

During the last cataclysmic recession, California's state government was forced to cleave billions from its budget to close an historic deficit. This year, thanks to a very unequal economic downturn and a tax code that relies on the wealthy, the state is swimming in cash, even during the pandemic.

The waterline inched up even more in late March when the California Department of Finance announced that tax revenue is coming in \$14.3 billion over an earlier forecast. And now that President Joe Biden has signed the biggest economic relief bill in U.S. history, another wave of money is on its way.

The only challenge left for state lawmakers is to figure out how to spend it all.

Before they do, they will have to answer some thorny questions: In a year of unprecedented need, whose pleas for help will be prioritized?

Between the governor, who has wielded unprecedented emergency spending power since the beginning of the pandemic, and an increasingly frustrated Legislature, who will ultimately make those decisions and who will oversee the spending? And once the windfall from Uncle Sam arrives, what terms and conditions apply?

"This has not been like any other budget season that we've had," said Assembly member Vince Fong of Bakersfield, lead Republican on the Assembly Budget Committee.

Earlier this year, state lawmakers passed a series of emergency spending bills — on cash assistance, a school reopening plan, rental assistance — breaking from the typical budget-writing schedule.

"In addition to that, you have the state windfall and then you have the federal resources coming as well," Fong said. "We've got so many moving parts. I don't know if there's a playbook for that."

Few strings attached

Roughly \$150 billion is on its way to California from Washington, D.C., from the \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan. The bulk of that cash either circumvents the state government — including \$40 billion in checks to households and \$16 billion in direct relief to cities and counties — or has to be spent on specific programs such as vaccinations, child care or preparing schools for reopening.

But \$26 billion will go directly into a state budget already brimming with cash. Those funds come with very few strings attached; in a memo issued March 23, the nonpartisan Legislative Analyst's Office called it "flexible funding."

Under the broad conditions set by the federal legislation, this latest round of relief money to the state has to be spent addressing some aspect



Illustration by Anne Wernikoff, CalMatters; iStock

of the "public health emergency" or its "negative economic impacts," on pay for essential workers, on making up for lost tax revenue or on making "necessary investments in water, sewer, or broadband infrastructure."

In other words, it can be spent on a whole lot. The state has until the end of 2024 to spend the \$26 billion.

There are a few other restrictions. The federal relief bill also prohibits states from using the funds to either prop up their pension systems, something Republicans in Washington were loath to subsidize, or to cut taxes.

The prohibition on tax cuts could prevent California from passing Covid-related relief that enjoys bipartisan support in Sacramento. Those blocked proposals include one that would keep small businesses that received federal loans last year from having to pay taxes on the rescue money, along with tax credits for poorer Californians and housing developers.

In March, Keely Bosler, director of California's Department of Finance, wrote a letter to Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen seeking some extra flexibility around those rules.

But even with those conditions, the federal bill gives state lawmakers plenty of leeway over how to divvy up the cash. And even in a state the size of California, \$26 billion is a significant chunk of change.

In January, Gov. Gavin Newsom put forward his preliminary budget for the current year, proposing a record-breaking \$165 billion in discretionary spending. The federal relief money expands that pot of cash by another 16%.

Hands out

Phil Ting, the Democratic chairperson of the Assembly Budget Committee, contrasts this year's financial picture with the one California lawmakers faced in 2009. Amid the collapse of the national housing market and substantially less federal relief, legislators cut nearly \$16 billion in spending and raised taxes by another \$4 billion that year.

"As we learned last time...going too small extends the recession," said Ting,

who represents San Francisco.

And though the incoming federal money and the cushion of extra state tax revenue constitutes an unprecedented budget windfall, Ting said the need is also unprecedented.

"It doesn't feel like that much money given the amount that was lost in the economy," he said.

Among the expensive problems the pandemic has foisted on state government: Closed schools, a backlogged and chronically dysfunctional unemployment claims system, spiking utility debts and the need to vaccinate every adult in California.

Homelessness, wildfire prevention, patchy Internet access and poverty are perennial challenges that haven't gone anywhere.

The requests from activists and lobbyists are already pouring into the state Capitol.

In March, a coalition of county governments, hospitals and nonprofits asked the governor to set aside \$8 billion for broadband internet. That came a week after the California Cable & Telecommunications Association sent in its own request that \$1 billion go to a high-speed internet development program — and that the state temporarily nix the cable bill surcharge that pays for it.

The California Chamber of Commerce is likewise hoping lawmakers will use some of the extra cash to pay down the state's unemployment insurance debt, which is set to be paid for with a payroll tax.

Anthony York, a spokesperson for the California Medical Association, which advocates for the state's doctors in Sacramento, has another idea.

"There's a strong case to be made that much of that money should go to health care and expanding health coverage and fortifying our health care infrastructure," he said.

He'd like the state to support small physician practices that have struggled as patients have delayed non-essential visits, and to boost the rates that doctors receive from Medi-Cal, the public health insurance system for low-income Californians.

Advocates for low-income Californians say they hope funds are prioritized for those most harmed by the pandemic and economic downturn, even if that demographic employs fewer lobbyists.

"There's a frenzy I'm sure to come up with good ideas" for how to use the money, said Jennifer Fearing, who lobbies for the state's association of nonprofits, including Meals on Wheels. "I would surmise that not all of them are tied to our values or to some of the pressing disparities that were really made clear during the pandemic. I would hope we can prioritize those."

Chris Hoene, executive director of the California Budget & Policy Center, said he welcomes that political debate.

"There'll be political contention about what should be prioritized and what should receive more funding," he said. "But that's certainly a better situation to be in than having to have political fights over who gets cut and who doesn't get cut, which is what we experienced last time around."

Who decides spending?

Another source of political tension: The contention between the Newsom administration and the Legislature over which branch of government has the ultimate say over where this money goes.

It's a fundamental separation-of-powers debate that's been brewing in Sacramento for more than a year now. California law gives governors expansive authority to spend money as they see fit during emergencies. Newsom has made ample use of that power since the beginning of the pandemic.

That's rankled some legislators, including Democrats, who have been complaining since last summer of being snubbed or left out of the loop. Calls for additional oversight have become louder following media reports on no-bid contracts awarded by the Newsom administration to businesses that were either poorly vetted or to political donors or favored businesses.

Because the federal money will arrive in the middle of the budget-writing process, it ought to be subject to the same checks, balances and transparency requirements as any other kind of spending, Ting said.

But the governor's most recent budget proposal includes a provision that would allow the administration to make use of incoming federal funds for Covid relief however it chooses without notifying the Legislature.

In an Assembly hearing last week, Department of Finance analyst Stephen Benson said the administration would use the power only "in the specific situations where immediate response is necessary."

Asked whether that provision would allow the governor to spend federal money without approval from the Legislature, Ting said there was legal ambiguity.

"Ask 10 lawyers and you'll probably get 20 different opinions," he said. But, he noted, "the Legislature's main authority is to appropriate money."

CalMatters.org is a nonprofit, nonpartisan media organization explaining California policies and politics. Read more at calmatters.org.

How to search for senior discounts in 2021

Dear Savvy Senior,
I just turned 60 and would like to find out the best way to go about locating senior discounts.

- Looking to Save

Dear Looking,
One of the best, yet underutilized perks of growing older in the United States is the many discounts that are available to older adults.

There are literally thousands of discounts on a wide variety of products and services including restaurants, grocery stores, travel and lodging, entertainment, retail and apparel, health and beauty, automotive services and much more. These discounts – typically ranging between 5 and 25 percent off – can add up to save you hundreds of dollars each year.

So, if you don't mind admitting your age, here are some tips and tools to help you find the discounts you may be eligible for.

Ask!

The first thing to know is that most businesses don't advertise them, but many give senior discounts just for the asking, so don't be shy.

You also need to know that while some discounts are available as soon as you turn 50, most don't kick in until you turn 55, 60, 62 or 65.

Search Online

Because senior discounts frequently



By Jim Miller

change and can vary depending on where you live and the time of the year, the internet is the easiest way to locate them.

A good place to start is at TheSeniorList.com (click on the "Senior Discounts" tab), which provides a large list of discounts in categories, i.e., restaurant dining, grocery stores, retail stores, prescription medications, travel discounts and more.

You can also search for discounts by provider. Go to a search engine like Google and Yahoo and type in the business or organization you're curious about, followed by "senior discount" or "senior discount tickets."

If you use a smartphone, there are also apps you can use like the "Senior Discounts & Coupons" app (available on the App Store and Google Play), which categorizes discounts by age and type.

Join a Club

Another good avenue to senior discounts is through membership organizations like AARP, which offers

its members age 50 and older a wide variety of discounts through affiliate businesses (see AARPdiscounts.com).

If, however, you don't like or agree with AARP, there are other organizations you can join that also provide discounts like the American Seniors Association (AmericanSeniors.org), the American Automobile Association (AAA.com), or for retired federal workers, the National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association (NARFE.org).

Types of Discounts

Here's an abbreviated rundown of some of the different types of discounts you can expect to find.

Restaurants: Senior discounts are common at restaurants and fast-food establishments – like Applebee's, Arby's, Burger King, Chili's, Denny's and IHOP – ranging from free/discounted drinks, to discounts off your total order.

Retailers: Many thrift stores like Goodwill and Salvation Army, and certain retailers like TJ Maxx, Banana Republic, Kohl's, Michaels, Ross and

Walgreens stores offer a break to seniors on certain days of the week.

Grocery stores: Many locally owned grocery stores offer senior discount programs, as do some chains like BI-LO, Piggly-Wiggly, Fry's Food Stores, New Seasons, Fred Meyer, and Hy-Vee, which offer discounts on certain days of the week, but they vary by location.

Travel: American, United and Southwest Airlines provide limited senior fares in the U.S. to passengers 65 and older, while British Airlines offers AARP members discounts of up to \$200. Amtrak provides a 15 percent discount to travelers over 62. Most car rental companies give discounts to 50-plus customers or those who belong to organizations like AARP. Royal Caribbean, Norwegian, Celebrity and Carnival cruise lines offer discount rates to cruisers 55 and over. And, most hotels offer senior discounts, usually ranging from 10 to 20 percent.

Entertainment: Most movie theaters, museums, golf courses, ski slopes and other public entertainment venues provide reduced admission to seniors over 60 or 65. And the National Park Service offers a lifetime senior pass for those 62 and older for \$80 (see nps.gov/planyourvisit/passes.htm).

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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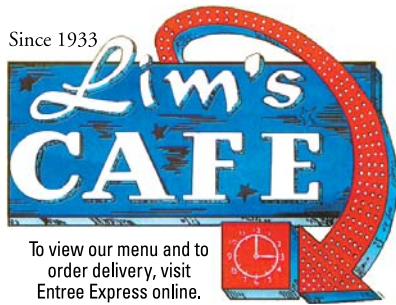
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THE BACK PAGE

May Deadline
Wednesday
April 21

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MARKET HOURS
Friday, Market Premiere & Fundraiser
4pm - 8pm
Saturday, 9am - 4pm

ADMISSION
Friday Premiere & Saturday - \$15.50
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To...

- Fun
- Education
- Opportunity
- Adventure
- Health
- Saving \$
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