

**January
2025**

Santa Barbara County

**Volume 13
Issue 1**



COLAB

The Coalition of Labor, Agriculture & Business

**Inside the
January Issue:**

Happy New Year!

My Psychic Predictions For 2025	2
Sen. Rand Paul's Annual 'Festivus' Report	3
Taxpayers Are Building A \$5 Million Snack Bar	4
Luring Fish To Their Death And Loving It	5
Trump Charts A New Climate Course	6
Gavin Newsom Speaks Loudly, But Carries A Very Small Stick	7
Unpardonable: Biden Grants Mass Clemency To Death Row Inmates In Last Gasp Of Failed Presidency	8
Why The Electoral College Is Vital	9
Green Energy Gluttony: The World Is Stuck On Stupid	10
Cultural Magic	11
Santa Jarvis's Naughty and Nice List	12

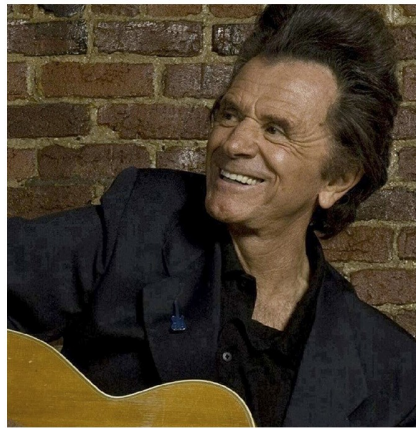
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My Psychic Predictions For 2025

By Andy Caldwell

Please enjoy these predictions in the tradition of the best supermarket tabloids.

After 20 years of having served as an elected official, County Supervisor **Das Williams** will go where all bureaucrats in this area go for a lucrative semi-retirement gig: UCSB. Due to his super-ego-fueled tendency to give a lecture at any given moment, demonstrating everything he knows about every single subject known to man, he will get a job as a lecturer at the Bren School of Environmental Science. The problem is his lectures will never end. Thereby, all his students will eventually have to drop his class to finish their degrees.

The reason there were no more BLM riots, such as was the case after the **Daniel Penny** "not guilty" verdict in New York, is because all the people that once made their living by showing up to riot have been hired to teach Critical Race Theory in our schools, or they have been hired to become Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion managers by government and big corporations.

Speaking of DEI, the County of Santa Barbara's new DEI manager (salary plus benefits will be about \$200k) will require that all employees list their personal pronouns in all correspondence and reports. Here are some personal pronoun suggestions for county employees who may not know how to describe themselves accurately:

Me/Myself/I;

I/waste/tax dollars;

My/pension's/unsustainable;

I'm not happy/unless/the public's not happy;

This/beats working/for a living;

I/work from home/ha ha ha.

If you think the County of Santa Barbara and the State Coastal Commission will have the last laugh on preventing the restart of the Sable (formerly Exxon) offshore rigs and onshore facility, think again. I predict President-elect **Donald Trump** will reauthorize offshore barging operations for the oil production and, in the same breath, he will tell the Coastal Commission and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to go pound sand for trying to limit **Elon Musk's** (Trump's new BFF) Space X increased launch schedule at Vandenberg.

Bob Nelson's Dead End



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County Supervisor **Bob Nelson** is going to have a street named after him in a new development. Unfortunately, it is a dead-end street. Supervisor Nelson, with whom I mostly agree, has gone apoplectic regarding a proposed development known as Richard's Ranch. How bad is his apoplexy? He had to receive a public admonition from Supervisors Hartmann and Williams that developers must be treated fairly. And that is from two supervisors who have never met a developer that they liked.

Bob's dead-end has to do with the fact that no matter how much he wants the developer to go through the county's long, expensive, uncertain, and tortured process to build some badly needed homes in the Orcutt area, the county has no state water to serve the project. Hence, the City of Santa Maria (the county capital of state water) has graciously agreed to annex the land and, by law, to split future tax revenues with the county. So, what's not to love? Bob's dead end! That is, if Bob manages to successfully sabotage the multi-

Sen. Rand Paul's Annual 'Festivus' Report: A Whopping \$1,008,313,329,626.12 Of Government Waste

By Katy Grimes

Including ice-skating drag queens, a \$12 Million Las Vegas pickleball complex, \$4,840,082 on Ukrainian influencers...

U.S. Sen. Rand Paul just released his annual "Festivus Report" of wasteful government spending. The 2024 listing does not disappoint – until you remember that all of us are paying for this abuse of taxpayers' funds by electing the congressional wastrels.

This year, Sen. Paul highlights a whopping \$1,008,313,329,626.12. "That's over \$1 trillion in government waste, including things like ice-skating drag queens, a \$12 Million Las Vegas pickleball complex, \$4,840,082 on Ukrainian influencers, and more! No matter how much money the government has wasted, politicians keep

demanding even more," Sen. Paul reports.

Last year there was \$900,000,000,000 of waste in Sen. Paul's Festival report – nearly double 2022's report.

"Who's to blame for our crushing national debt? Everybody," Paul says. "This year, members of both political parties in Congress voted for massive spending bills, filled with subsidies for underperforming industries, continued military aid to Ukraine, and controversial climate initiatives. As Congress spends to reward its favored pet projects, the American taxpayers are forced to pay through high prices and crippling interest rates."

"The same big spenders teamed up, yet again, to continue sending Americans' hard-earned money to foreign countries, funding endless wars, all while STILL ignoring our wide-open southern border."

"So, before we get to the Feats of Strength, it's time for my Airing of (spending) Grievances!"

Festivus is a holiday celebrated on December 23rd, created on the Jerry Seinfeld Show by Frank Costanza, George Costanza's father, as an alternative to Christmas. According to Seinfeld Fandom, "He came upon the idea after pummeling a man in the face in a toy-store dispute over a doll (for George). In his own words, 'As I rained blows upon him, I realized, 'There had to be another way!'"

Here are a few of my favorites on [Sen. Paul's long Festivus list](#):

Ghost Towns on the Government's Dime: The federal government spent \$10 billion on maintaining, leasing, and furnishing almost entirely empty buildings.

Taxpayers Fund a Disinformation Index: The Department of State (DOS) wasted \$330,000 to fund censorship of non-liberal and conservative media.

The Department of the Interior (DOI) spent \$12 Million on a Las Vegas Pickleball Complex.

Oh Rats! HHS Spends Nearly Half a Million on a Depressing Study of Lonely, Starved Rats: The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) spent \$419,470 to determine if lonely rats seek cocaine more than happy rats.

The Influencer Effect Hits Foreign Policy: The Department of State (DOS) squandered \$4,840,082 on influencers.

The Department of State (DOS) spent \$3 Million for 'Girl-Centered Climate Action' in Brazil.

Bibbidi-Bobbidi-Boo, There Goes Your Tax Dollars Too! The federal government spent \$7,026,689 on various magical projects.

(Continued on page 19)



Taxpayers Are Building A \$5 Million Snack Bar

By Andy Caldwell

Years ago, I was a member of the Santa Barbara County tiger salamander recovery team. For reasons I will explain, I wasn't all that concerned about the species as much as the 180,000 acres of mostly ag land the feds sought to tie up for its survival. What I learned during that time caused my head to explode when I recently read that the feds managed to extort \$5 million from the Santa Maria airport to help "recover" the species.

Let's discuss this colossal debacle.

If you remember the premise of the survival of the fittest from biology class, then you realize that some species are on the bottom rungs, so to speak, because they have zero predatory instincts and defensive capabilities. That would be the tiger salamander. Honestly, the only reason the species exists is to provide a slimy snack to birds, fish, frogs, and even other salamanders. When the salamanders are not being reared and eaten in vernal (seasonal) ponds, they go hide in a hole somewhere until the next procreation/snack cycle begins anew. This explains their abysmal 1-2% survival rate in the wild.

Besides predation, the other main reason for their pitiful survival rate here on the Central Coast has to do with the fact that we have few vernal pools to begin with, which rarely provide the 3-4 months of standing water required for the procreation/snack cycle to be completed. That is, we don't have enough rain and subsequent ponding to facilitate the life cycle of these little varmints. Of course, if you were to travel to the land of 10,000 lakes, i.e., Minnesota, there is so much water and so many salamanders the locals sell them for fish bait! So, here \$5 million of our tax dollars are being wasted on an "endangered" species that is so plentiful elsewhere you can buy them by the bucket in the springtime.

An Anti-Science Emergency Declaration

The great plan the feds came up with consists of burying 105 tubs on airport property to enable the breed stock to grow and reproduce sans any predation to increase their survival rate. Why bother? Once they are released in the wild, they will end up being eaten anyway!

This charade is a perfect example of why the Endangered Species Act needs to be revised. Please understand that what we are trying to save here isn't really a species, it is a sub-species of a sub-species of a

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sub-species. That is, there are 740 different salamander species and gazillions of them exist in the wild with dozens of sub-species. *Santa Barbara County* salamanders are a puny sub-species of the *California* tiger salamanders sub-species. Again, the fact that they are considered endangered here on the Central Coast has to do with our lack of rainfall and subsequent vernal pool habitat formation.

Years ago, the species was listed by way of an emergency declaration, *sans* a scientific record to justify the same long before it was discovered that there are dozens of pools that can form in the region from time to time. The feds nonetheless slapped a 180,000-acre critical habitat designation to help the species survive by limiting development in the area, albeit critical habitat designations are not legally in effect unless there is a federal nexus to the project that could disturb the habitat.

This is how they nailed the airport. The airport is regulated by the federal government and by extension so was the farmer that leased ground from the airport. The feds claimed the farmer destroyed habitat and so the airport (read: taxpayers) had to pay a steep \$5 million price to help a slimy little snack survive a little while longer than normal. The feds needed money for their recovery program and unfortunately taxpayers got stuck with the bill.

Luring Fish To Their Death And Loving It

By Andy Caldwell

Twitchell reservoir was created to alleviate flooding throughout the Santa Maria Valley and to store storm water to recharge the aquifer during the summer months. Regardless, the feds are proposing to release “extra water” (there is no such thing) from the normally dry Twitchell reservoir to help recover steelhead trout runs on the normally dry Santa Maria River (it is dry 90% of the time), which ultimately involves wasting the water by running it to the ocean. This is just one of many projects in California, including Lake Cachuma releases, that waste upwards of 40% of its water every year.

The proposal itself lists a slew of reasons that proves this project is not only a bad idea but doomed to fail. For instance, the proposal simply assumes the species is present because they can't find any fish in the dry riverbed. The proposal also admits that often the water quality in the Santa Maria River is toxic to fish because, for instance, anytime the river is running it has a lot of dirt in it from storm water runoff (fish can't breathe in turbid waters). Furthermore, the proposal admits that fish passage was “rare and episodic” even before the construction of Twitchell, as the natural conditions on the Santa Maria and lower Sisquoc rivers are not suitable for spawning or rearing habitat. Finally, the proposal rightly warns that it will most likely lure more fish to their death rather than result in spawning runs.

Steelhead trout, which thrive in the ocean, need extremely cold, clear, clean abundant waters for their return passage and rearing. The Santa Maria River provides none of these. We live in a semi-arid desert that averages only 10-12 inches of rain per year. Thus, this is the wrong place and the wrong time to try and restore something that was rare and episodic to begin with. For all these reasons, the farming and ranching communities, along with the City of Santa Maria, have been asking the feds to abandon this ridiculous plan.

A Waste of Time and Water

On top of all that, the document glosses over certain historical facts about the Santa Maria “River” itself. First, the Santa Maria River, before the construction of the Santa Maria levee and Twitchell reservoir, was nothing less than a meandering flood plain wash. That is, the “banks” of the so-called river were several miles apart, covering the area from the Nipomo bluffs to what is now Betteravia Road. Because this flood plain often flowed directly through the township of



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Santa Maria, the “river” ended up being redirected around the city by a comparatively narrow artificially constructed flood control channel until it got past the city, wherein the levee widens considerably all the way until it hits natural constraints west of the city of Guadalupe (the levee ends in Guadalupe) which is thereby prone to flooding.

Hence, the original morphology of the river has been changed forever. Yet, again, as the document admits, the fish runs in the river were extremely rare and episodic. Moreover, the entire length of this “river” runs through privately-owned farm and ranch lands that are currently used for agricultural purposes, including farming and grazing. We are very concerned that the document mentions none of the expected impacts to agriculture that this project will present, including restrictions on cows accessing the water, and farmers being able to plant in the river bed, which they have been doing for decades, along with the needed applications of chemicals to restrict pests and diseases and promote plant growth, as these practices could easily be restricted in the future out of deference to non-existent fish runs. There could be other significant impacts to permitted sand and gravel operations in the riverbed as well.

For all the above reasons, we believe this project is a waste of time, energy, money, and water.

Trump Charts A New Climate Course

By Bonner C. Cohen

The pall that descended on the latest U.N. climate confab in the wake of Donald Trump's election was justified. It's a foretaste of things under an administration determined to part company with global environmentalists.

Along with issuing the obligatory proclamations of impending planetary doom, the gathering in Baku, Azerbaijan, was tasked with arranging financing (taxpayer handouts) to help poorer countries deal with what are said to be the ravages of human-induced climate change. Hysterical rhetoric was duly produced, but when it came to wealth nations forking over cash, giddy expectations were not realized.

Led by India, countries of the Global South hoped for as much as \$1.3 trillion but had to settle for "commitments" of \$300 billion annually. They will probably see far less.

Europe is amid self-imposed deindustrialization, brought on in no small way by the green policies trumpeted as planet-saving in Baku. Auto giant Volkswagen, facing fierce competition from Chinese EV manufacturers, recently announced plans to shutter three plants in Germany, lay off 10,000 workers, and slash salaries across its workforce. Soaring energy prices, triggered by Germany's growing reliance on wind and solar power, have made it impossible for VW to compete with the Chinese EVs.

Northvolt, Sweden's once-promising EV battery startup, filed for bankruptcy on Nov. 24, citing higher-than-expected production costs and flagging demand for EVs in Europe and elsewhere.

Leaders in Britain, France and Germany may tout their allegiance to all manner of climate goals, but their economies and taxpayers are in no position to underwrite "clean energy" projects in countries with a well-deserved reputation for corruption.

Prospects for a climate shakedown are even bleaker in the United States. While the Biden administration scrambles to get as much funding for Inflation Reduction Act projects out the door before Jan. 20, look for the Trump administration to claw back as much of the unspent largess as possible after Inauguration Day. Given Trump's rejection of the whole climate agenda, the outstretched hands of self-professed global victims of climate change are not likely to be filled any time soon with American taxpayer money.



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By denying poor countries green handouts, Trump will be doing the impoverished people who inhabit them a real service. The global climate cartel — organizations like the United Nations and the World Economic Forum, left-of-center governments, subsidized purveyors of green energy and technologies, and well-funded environmental groups — has nothing to offer the world's poor. Windmills and solar panels — the cartel's stock and trade — will never alleviate their poverty.

(Continued on page 18)

Gavin Newsom Speaks Loudly, But Carries A Very Small Stick

By Steven Greenhut

SACRAMENTO – In his remarks at the Minnesota State Fair on Sept. 2, 1901, Vice President Teddy Roosevelt gave his famous “speak softly but carry a big stick” speech. It mainly detailed his view of the proper federal approach toward foreign affairs – one that promoted quiet, resolute action rather than loud, disrespectful and inflammatory rhetoric. But his remarks also outlined his vision for government involvement in domestic affairs.

Roosevelt was then a Republican, but the major parties have shifted ideologies over the years. At the time, many Republicans championed progressivism – a “square deal” that prioritized environmental protection, trust-busting, consumer safeguards and workers’ rights measures that reduced power from what Roosevelt called “representatives of predatory wealth.”

“A good many of you are probably acquainted with the old proverb, ‘Speak softly and carry a big stick – you will go far,’” he said. “If a man continually blusters ... a big stick will not save him from trouble, and neither will speaking softly avail, if back of the softness there does not lie strength, power. ... So it is with the nation. It is both foolish and undignified to indulge in undue self-glorification, and, above all, in loose-tongued denunciation of other peoples.”

Per historical accounts, party foes tried to shut him up by handing him the vice presidency, which they viewed as a dead-end promotion. Yet four days after Roosevelt’s Minneapolis speech, an anarchist shot President William McKinley. He died eight days later and Roosevelt, age 42, was inaugurated president. Two of the nation’s most prominent modern leaders ought to pay attention to this refresher.

The jump-off-the-page lesson applies to President-elect Donald Trump. He recently taunted and ridiculed our friendly Canadian neighbors, with whom we share the world’s longest undefended border. Could he please for once stop his loose-tongued denunciations? But there’s a bigger lesson for the pol who claims the mantle of resistance to the Trump resurgence. That man, California Gov. Gavin Newsom, should learn from his progressive forebears.

Earlier this month, Newsom called for yet another extraordinary session of the state Legislature to deal with the so-called “emergency” of the incoming GOP presidency. In the last special session, Newsom

spoke in his characteristically loud manner. He tried to pound the same themes as Roosevelt, with his vows to take on the power of “greedy” oil corporations, who supposedly abuse California residents by charging them outlandish prices for gasoline.

“Hard-working folks being fleeced by the greed of these oil companies. These price spikes go directly in their pocket,” the governor said. But there was no substance. Everyone knows that California’s gas prices are so high because of Newsom’s own climate and tax policies – something that was reinforced by his administration’s simultaneous support for a new fuels standard that will dramatically boost prices. The resulting law is a “little stick” requirement that refiners maintain larger stockpiles.

The new special session will probably earmark an additional \$25 million to the California Department of Justice so it can “Trump proof” the state by preparing a variety of lawsuits against expected GOP actions regarding climate-change, transgender, abortion, water and immigration policies. States routinely oppose the feds and vice versa. Progressive California filed 100-plus suits against the previous Trump administration, just as conservative Texas filed a similar number opposing Biden-Harris edicts.

That earmark will help Attorney General Rob Bonta, but it’s a rounding error in California’s \$290-billion 2025 budget. Lawmakers could easily find those extra funds during the normal course of legislative business, but a cynic might suggest that the main point here is to drive headlines and bolster Newsom’s position as the national leader of the Trump resistance (perhaps with an eye toward the 2028 election).

In fairness, Newsom – or Newsom as Trump childishly calls him – offered a subdued explanation,

(Continued on page 17)

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Unpardonable: Biden Grants Mass Clemency To Death Row Inmates In Last Gasp Of Failed Presidency

By Jarrett Stepman

In the waning days of a crumbling presidency that never really was, President Joe Biden—or whatever Biden-like facsimile is signing official documents these days—decided to finish out his term with one final blast of outrageous, yet cynical, wokery.

Biden wasn't content just to pardon his deadbeat son, Hunter, or hand out executive clemencies to more than 1,500 other criminals. No, he had to give mass commutations to inmates on federal death row: 37 to be exact.

That represents another bit of whiplash from Democrats over the past four years. They've gone from the party of "defund the police" to the party of "the rule of law" (supposedly) to the party the party of mass jail-breaking and bailouts for murderers.

It seems like the only people those on the Left want incarcerated are their political opponents. That's only principled if your principles are those of Josef Stalin's head of his secret police, Lavrentiy Beria.

The White House tried to portray Biden's mass nullification of death row as an act of conscience, a fulfillment of Biden's deep opposition to injustice or something. But a close reading of the carefully chosen language of the White House statement about his decision reveals the fact that this is less about Biden's commitment to life or justice than it is a payoff to the Left's activist class.

"President Biden has dedicated his career to reducing violent crime and ensuring a fair and effective justice system," Biden's statement reads. "He believes that America must stop the use of the death penalty at the federal level, except in cases of terrorism and hate-

motivated mass murder—which is why today's actions apply to all but those cases."

It's that last bit, everything after the "except" that stands out here. The three who didn't have their death sentences commuted were Boston Marathon bomber Dzhokhar Tsarnaev; Dylann Roof, who killed nine in a mass shooting at a black church in Charleston, South Carolina; and Robert Bowers, the man who committed the mass murder of 11 at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh.

What sets these men apart isn't really the heinousness of their crimes, but the fact that their crimes made national headlines.

They certainly didn't seem to care much about the victims' families.

"I was angry. I'm still angry. I am upset that this is even happening, that one man can make this decision without even talking to the victims, without any regard for what we've been through, what we're going through, and completely hurt, frustrated, and angry," said the daughter of Donna Major in an interview on TV's "Fox & Friends." Brandon Council, who was on Biden's list of commutations, gunned Major down during a robbery in 2017.

There were other upset families, too.

"While this is truly distressing news on a personal level for my family, it also feels like a complete dismissal and undermining of the federal justice system," said Marissa Gibson, the widow of police Officer Bryan Hurst who was murdered by now-former death row inmate Daryl Lawrence. "Lawrence's sentence was

(Continued on page 16)

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Why The Electoral College Is Vital

By Frank V. Vernuccio, Jr.

Proposals for radical alterations in the way Americans vote are dangerous concepts that would have dramatic consequences for the nation and its Constitution. Some, such as ranked choice voting, are an unblushing bid to prop up fringe, leftist candidates. Others, if adopted, would essentially disunite the nation and overturn its Constitution.

As they consistently have after each election loss, Democrat spokespeople have flooded the airwaves with complaints about the Electoral College. Why, they ask, can't we have a "popular vote," and let it be done with. Since the Electoral College process is part of the original design of the U.S. Constitution, it would be necessary to pass a Constitutional amendment to change this system. The National Archives notes that over the past 200 years more than 700 proposals have been introduced in Congress to reform or eliminate the Electoral College. There have been more proposals for Constitutional amendments on changing the Electoral College than on any other subject.

The answer is as simple as the name of the country: The United States of America. The incredibly successful nation created almost two and a half centuries ago was a union of separate states. Fresh off of dealing with a monarch, it was intentionally set up that way to both prevent the possibility of having an all-powerful dictator, and to prevent larger states from bullying smaller ones.

Abolishing the electoral college would essentially disenfranchise smaller states from having any say in the presidency. Indeed, even less populated areas of large states would lose influence. A collection of large cities, (New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Houston, Phoenix, Philadelphia, San Antonio, San Diego, Dallas, Austin, Jacksonville, etc.) would decide the outcome in who gets the White House.

Considering how badly many of those urban centers are run, that would not bode well for the future of the country! Beyond the practical policy implications, it would alienate the populations of those not living in California, Texas, New York, Florida, Pennsylvania, Illinois, who would, for the most part, be reduced to bystanders in the race for the only nationally-elected position.

A Heritage study analyzed the concept of a "National Popular Vote" (NPV) this way:

"The National Popular Vote (NPV) plan is the latest



in a long line of schemes designed to replace the Electoral College. Imbued with the ideals of this nation's Founders, the Electoral College has proved itself to be both effective in providing orderly elections for President and resilient in allowing a stable transfer of power of the leadership of the world's greatest democracy. Therefore, while it would be a mistake to replace the Electoral College, replacing this system with the NPV would be a disaster. The NPV would devalue the minority interests that the Founders sought to protect, create electoral administrative problems, encourage voter fraud, and radicalize the U.S. political system. It also would likely violate the U.S. Constitution's Compact Clause while directly contravening the Founders' view of federalism and a representative republic. In an age of perceived political dysfunction, effective policies already in place—especially successful policies established by this nation's Founders, such as the Electoral College—should be preserved."

Trent England, writing for the National Conference of State Legislatures outlined key reasons for the institution: "At the Constitutional Convention, the primary concern of delegates opposed to direct election was that big states would dominate presidential politics. By

(Continued on page 17)

Green Energy Gluttony: The World Is Stuck On Stupid

By Andy Caldwell

According to energy experts, dispatchable *generation* refers to power sources that can be adjusted on demand by grid operators to match supply with electricity demand. Examples of dispatchable generation include coal-fired plants, natural gas plants, and large hydroelectric plants (all of which have targets on their back) that can quickly ramp up or down depending on the grid's needs.

Dispatchable *power* is the capacity of these generation resources to provide reliable electricity when needed. It plays a fundamental role in grid stability by ensuring that fluctuations in demand can be met in real-time, which is critical in maintaining uninterrupted power supply and avoiding outages.

Unfortunately, for those people who want us to rely on solar and wind for all our energy needs, neither of these renewable sources are dispatchable with respect to generation or the ability to meet our needs 24/7. This has to do with the completely intermittent and unreliable power generation supplied by wind. And the fact that solar generation during the day doesn't meet the peak demand that occurs in the evening hour.

But that is only half of the story.

The *L.A. Times* recently acknowledged that the increasing oversupply (read: overkill) of solar power in CA has created a situation where energy traders can buy our excess solar power at prices so low they become *negative*.

What does that mean?

It means that we consumers must pay other states to take the excess energy off our hands lest it overload the grid. Either that, or the solar farms must be shut down completely (they call that "curtailment"), except in those cases when solar farm operators can count on federal subsidies (\$54 million in 2023) that pay out

handsomely even when the energy is not needed.

Consider the Following:

We used tax breaks, low interest loans, mandates, and incentives of various kinds to get all this solar built and now we are paying other states to take the electricity off our hands at CA rate payer expense. Meanwhile, even more solar is being built. These are a few of the reasons that the CA Public Utility Commission slashed financial incentives for rooftop solar. The *L.A. Times* reports that the State of New Mexico saved \$35 million in 2022, at our expense, by taking CA's excess solar power. Arizona has a 24-hour trading floor looking to buy cheap or negatively priced solar power from CA; that is how much power and money we are wasting while in our zeal we seek to eliminate dispatchable sources of electricity generation.

Zealots, like local supervisor **Das Williams**, will tell you that building industrial-scale battery plants can solve this problem. But, as the *Times* reports, most industrial-sized batteries can only store power for four hours (not even enough to get us through the night). In addition, battery storage effectively doubles the cost of solar.

In Britain, this same phenomenon is occurring with respect to wind power. According to *The Telegraph*, British bill payers have spent an "absurd" £1bn (equivalent to \$1.2 billion U.S.) so far this year to temporarily switch off wind turbines as the grid struggles to cope with their excess power. Sweden's wind energy sector is also crashing financially.

In Germany, after they closed all their nuclear plants, the wind quit blowing. What to do? According to NPR, at least 20 coal-fired power plants nationwide are being resurrected or extended past their closing dates to ensure Germany has enough energy to get through the winter.



Howard Jarvis
Taxpayers Association
— established in 1978 —

Cultural Magic

By Daniel Greenfield

Changing the world has become a dead end.

Myths were once rare and exclusive things. The stories told around fires made up the soul of a culture. From the printing press to the internet, technology helped change all that. The oral became written and the written became all too easy to duplicate. Stories ceased to be communal and became personal. A written scroll was a painstaking effort, too precious to be hoarded, while a book could be one of a million copies. Everyone could have their own stories.

When communal stories became personal stories: some things were gained and others were lost. Religious stories (there is a reason that the Bible remains the quintessential bestseller), national myths and cultural lore gave way to stories of personal empowerment. The story of the group became that of the individual and 'individualism', absent after the fall of Greece and Rome, was reborn, first in tales and then the power shift from the collective to the individual.

Western individualism would not have existed without the underpinning of individual narratives and they would not have come into being without a printing press and books that people could read privately, instead of in groups, that increasingly came to center around the individual, not as a prototype, a set of principles or a racial hero, but as the fulfillment of individual drives.

The 'cultural magic' of the lore became democratized. It no longer existed only to amplify the agendas of the group, but to actualize the individual. Protagonists no longer needed to be moral or if immoral, a cautionary tale, it was enough that they satisfied someone's desires. They could be foolish, selfish and immoral, commit adultery, lie, cheat and steal, without facing a reckoning.

The old culture wars had been between different cultures. The ascension of the Greek world led to a round of cultural wars over how much of the new

Greek culture to absorb and how much of it to resist. But the new cultural wars were taking place within a culture over cultural morality. These culture wars continued for half a millennium and while there was a good deal of back and forth, they were largely marked by the slow relentless dismantling of cultural morality.

By the 19th century, culture had become an obsession that affected everything and defined society. The rate of change was accelerating and culture moved as fast as technology did. In the 20th century, culture fused with technology so that the medium became the message. Since the medium was change, the culture became about change and society had to keep changing.

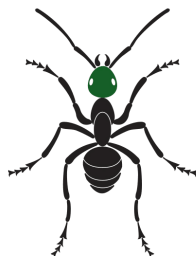
With the advent of the counterculture, culture ceased to become fashion and became revelation. Not since the old Italians had treated their Renaissance sculptors, painters and tinkerers as saints had any generation become as convinced that their entertainers were really prophets, not just of beauty or ideas, but of a coming new age that would transform all of mankind.

Religion declined and culture decisively took its place. Culture offered no certainty, but in a world that seemed to be coming apart, neither did religion. While religion stifled hedonism, culture praised the liberating powers of individual impulses to bring joy and change the world. The counterculture soured into drug abuse, violence and cynicism, but the religious revivals that followed in its wake failed to shift the fundamental balance of cultural power away from it.

Cultural magic relentlessly predicted change and since change came, culture was right. The new world might not be better, but it was retroactively inevitable and so cultural magic ruled. The culture was the right side of history and if it seemed awful, that was because we were awful.

Conservatives grappled with the culture before surrendering to it. The culture wars are no longer about the role that culture should play, but what messaging

(Continued on page 14)



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Santa Jarvis's Naughty and Nice List

By John Coupal

Oh, by gosh and by golly; it's time for mistletoe and holly. It's also time for the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association naughty and nice list. We made a list. We checked it twice. Time to find out who's naughty and nice to California taxpayers this year.

First, let's start with the nice list. Well, it's you! The voters of California. You defeated Proposition 5 by 10 points! That's a huge win for taxpayers because Prop. 5 would have made it easier to raise property taxes by making it easier for local governments to take on new debt, by issuing bonds. Local bonds are repaid by placing extra charges on property tax bills. Prop. 5 would have lowered the vote threshold to approve nearly all local bonds from the current two-thirds requirement down to 55 percent.

Prop. 5 was put on the ballot by the legislature, where it was titled ACA 1. The original version would have lowered the threshold for bonds and special taxes, a direct attack on Proposition 13. But when their own polling showed that ACA 1 would fail in a statewide vote (it did anyway), they desperately passed a new measure, ACA 10, attempting to make the attack more palatable to voters by making it apply only to bonds.

That puts the legislators who voted against this monstrosity no on the nice list. They were Brian Dahle, Shannon Grove, Brian Jones, Janet Nguyen, Roger Niello, Rosilicie Ochoa Bogh, Kelly Seyarto, Scott Wilk, Megan Dahle, Diane Dixon, Bill Essayli, James Gallagher, Tom Lackey, Joe Patterson, Kate Sanchez and Tri Ta.

Also, many in the capital media community also made it on the nice list. For years, it felt like the powers-that-be could do no wrong in the eyes of a compliant Sacramento media, but Ashley Zavala, Eytan Wallace, Alexei Koseff, Ryan Sabalow, Sameea Kamal, Katie Grimes, Emily Hoeven and Dan Walters among others are doing a fantastic job asking tough questions and making the comfortable uncomfortable. We may not always agree, but they aren't pulling punches.



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That brings us to the naughty list.

If legislators who voted no on ACA 10 get sugar plums in their stockings, then the legislators who voted to make it easier to raise your taxes get a big lump of coal.

They are Ben Allen, Bob Archuleta, Angelique Ashby, Toni Atkins, Josh Becker, Catherine Blakespear, Steven Bradford, Anna Caballero, Dave Cortese, Bill Dodd, Maria Elena Durazo, Susan Eggman, Steve Glazer, Lena Gonzalez, Melissa Hurtado, John Laird, Monique Limon, Mike McGuire, Caroline Menjivar, Dave Min, Josh Newman, Steve Padilla, Anthony Portantino, Richard Roth, Susan Rubio, Nancy Skinner, Lola Smallwood-Cuevas, Henry Stern, Tom Umberg, Aisha Wahab, Scott Wiener, Dawn Addis, Cecilia Aguiar-Curry, David Alvarez, Joaquin Arambula, Rebecca Bauer-Kahan, Steve Bennett, Marc Berman, Tasha Boerner, Mia Bonta, Isaac Bryan, Lisa Calderon, Juan Carrillo, Wendy Carrillo, Sabrina Cervantes, Damon Connolly, Mike Fong, Laura Friedman, Jesse Gabriel, Eduardo Garcia, Tim Grayson, Matt Haney,

(Continued on page 13)

Santa Jarvis's Naughty and Nice List

Cont.

(Continued from page 12)

Gregg Hart, Chris Holden, Jacqui Irwin, Corey Jackson, Ash Kalra, Alex Lee, Evan Low, Josh Lowenthal, Kevin McCarty, Tina McKinnor, Al Muratsuchi, Stephanie Nguyen, Liz Ortega, Blanca Pacheco, Diane Papan, Gail Pellerin, Cottie Petrie-Norris, Sharon Quirk-Silva, Anthony Rendon, Eloise Reyes, Luz Rivas, Freddie Rodriguez, Blanca Rubio, Miguel Santiago, Phil Ting, Carlos Villapudua, Chris Ward, Akilah Weber, Buffy Wicks, Lori Wilson, Jim Wood, Rick Zbur and Robert Rivas.

And finally, a big bah humbug to Gov. Gavin Newsom, Assembly Speaker Robert Rivas, Senate pro tempore Mike McGuire and the California Supreme Court for removing the Taxpayer Protection Act from the ballot. It would have closed loopholes that courts have carved in Prop. 13, required truthful ballot labels, curbed the power of bureaucracies including CARB to impose fees that are really taxes, and given voters the right to vote on state tax increases.

TPA had broad support among hundreds of business associations, chambers of commerce and virtually every taxpayer association in California all concerned with the preservation of Propositions 13 and 218. But the Supreme Court, in doing the bidding of Gov. Newsom and the state's supermajority legislative leaders, ignored the rights of more than 1.4 million California voters who signed petitions to put the initiative on the ballot.

For that, they all deserve not just a lump of coal, but an entire sack of it. (Or a sack of something else we cannot mention).

Jon Coupal is president of the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association.

cannot mention).

Jon Coupal is president of the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association.

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Cultural Magic *Cont.*

(Continued from page 11)

the culture should be invested with. Having forgotten that the medium is the message, they believe that the message can be altered by becoming the counterculture and thus co-opting the culture the way the radicals once did.

But when the medium is change, the only cultural message that can be centered is radical change. To become a counterculture is to embody radical change and then to be changed by it.

Technology democratized culture but then collectivized it again as individual printing presses gave way to publishing monopolies and web sites to social media monopolies. Technological disruptions initially individualize only to then collectivize. Cultural change broke up old traditions through individualism and then collectivized to impose new cultural regimes.

Change created cultural magic. The rapid rate of technological and social change made culture appear disruptive and therefore prophetic. To the youth of each generation, culture appeared to be a harbinger of a new world, only to fall apart leaving behind nostalgia for its lost optimism. Each future became retrofuturistic and each utopia turned into a dystopia to be torn down again.

Our culture has become collectivist and disposable, alienating and ubiquitous, trying and failing to fill the role of religion and national mythos all the while setting out to demolish them. And social media's mission of enlisting users into making culture has only made teenagers as depressed and dysfunctional as the

'creators' at the top of the cultural food chain.

Depression rates correlate with cultural saturation. The more people engage with a narcissistic feedback culture, the more unhappy they become. Like addicts, they turn to culture for validation, meaning and purpose, only to come away drained and depressed.

Cultural magic breaks up the family and replaces it with dissatisfaction, it replaces actual cultures with intellectual properties and religion with AI generated fictions on an extended payment plan. The only future it offers is the dysfunctional one that it makes out of people.

A healthy culture maintains a balance between individual drives and social values, between change and tradition, and does not confuse narratives with truth. It knows that we need to believe in more than whatever we invent ourselves. While we need to change, we also need to have touchstones that allow us to control how we change and what that change is to achieve.

Culture is magic when it conveys to us not only what we need to change, but also what to keep. Radical change destroys what exists now with the promise of making something better down the road, but the only thing that follows in the wake of its destruction is dependency on the destroyers. We have learned what it is to destroy, now we need to learn what to hold on to.

Daniel Greenfield, blogger (SULTAN KNISH), columnist and a reporter at the David Horowitz Freedom Center, investigative journalist at FrontPageMag.com and author of the new book, "Domestic Enemies: The Founding Fathers' Fight Against the Left"



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The COLAB Foundation is a public charity formed to procure funding for the Santa Barbara County Coalition of Labor, Agriculture and Business (COLAB) and other select non-profit entities to advance education and science, combat community deterioration and lessen the burden of government.

Of course, the donations to the COLAB Foundation can only be used to educate the public about the work that COLAB and others are doing in our community, but we have been educating people all along!

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Unpardonable: Biden Grants Mass Clemency To Death Row Inmates In Last Gasp Of Failed Presidency *Cont.*

(Continued from page 8)

imposed by a jury, and it should be upheld as such.”

President-elect Donald Trump rightly slammed Biden’s decision with a Christmas post on Truth Social.

He said merry Christmas to everyone but the “37 most violent criminals, who killed, raped, and plundered like virtually no one before them, but were just given, incredibly, a pardon by Sleepy Joe Biden.”

As more than a few commentators have noted already, what “Biden” did was a grave act of injustice. If he really was opposed to the death penalty, then the appropriate place to start was with Congress. At least make some kind of larger appeal to the American people.

But Biden has never actually been one to care about process or justice. His career has been defined by empty rhetoric and raw political calculations. Now, at the end, he’s cemented his hollow legacy with one last act of egregious coalition nursing with no regard for right and wrong.

It’s a fitting, shameful end to a presidency that will surely rank among the most dismal in our country’s history.

Jarrett Stepman is a columnist for The Daily Signal. He is also the author of "The War on History: The Conspiracy to Rewrite America's Past."

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Gavin Newsom Speaks Loudly, But Carries A Very Small Stick *Cont.*

(Continued from page 7)

noting California “will work with the incoming administration and we want President Trump to succeed in serving all Americans. But when there is overreach, when lives are threatened, when rights and freedoms are targeted, we will take action.” How about taking a wait-and-see approach? Better yet, how about focusing on fixing our state’s not-insubstantial problems?

As I wrote on these pages recently, it’s not as if anyone in Trump World is quaking in their boots at the prospect of staring down our ineffective and surprisingly unpopular governor. If anything, Newsom – a prototypical modern progressive governor whose pro-democracy tour of Southern states evoked more mocking than fear – will serve as a perfect foil for MAGA.

I’m partial to incoming Los Angeles County District Attorney Nathan Hochman’s approach to expected challenges from Washington, D.C. In a recent interview with Deadline Hollywood, the Republican-turned-independent said, “I will uphold all the laws that are out there, including the ones that protect immigrants here in Los Angeles County, full stop.”

Finally, someone who will just enforce the law and speak softly about it. Newsom could learn a thing or two from him, too.

Steven Greenhut is Western region director for the R Street Institute and a member of the Southern California News Group editorial board. Write to him at sgreenhut@rstreet.org.

Why The Electoral College Is Vital *Cont.*

(Continued from page 9)

using a two-step election process, the Electoral College prevents one region, or a handful of major metropolitan areas, from controlling the White House. Support must be geographically distributed around the country in order to win enough states to capture an electoral vote majority. This was particularly important after the Civil War. The nation remained divided, and Democrats became dominant in the south. A combination of intense popularity with some voters and violent suppression of others allowed Democrats to receive the most popular votes in 1876 and 1888 even though they lost the Electoral College and thus those elections.”

Eliminating the Electoral College would be a disaster for the United States

Frank V. Vernuccio, Jr., J.D., editor-in-chief, New York Analysis of Policy & Government and, co-host of the popular WVOX weekly radio show, “The Vernuccio/Novak Report”

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Trump Charts A New Climate Course *Cont.*

(Continued from page 6)

Trump's pledge to achieve American global energy dominance may sound jingoistic, but the policy will benefit Americans. For example, lifting the January 2024 moratorium on the approval of new liquified natural gas export terminals will enable eager customers in Europe, Asia and elsewhere to avail themselves of a reliable and affordable energy source.

A federal judge has already struck down the "pause" on the Department of Energy's approval of proposed LNG export terminals. Once fracking pioneer Chris Wright has been installed as Trump's energy secretary, the Energy Department can move forward with exporting American natural gas around the world.

Putting more American oil and gas on global markets will help keep the price of energy in check worldwide, which will mainly benefit people of middle and lower income. This will require upgrading America's energy infrastructure, including constructing much-needed oil and gas pipelines — something Trump has pledged to do.

Just as Trump and his team refuse to subject the American public to the green austerity a climate-centric energy policy would necessarily impose, so, too, should people in poorer countries be freed from the shackles that global environmentalists are determined to keep them in.

Trump should pressure the World Bank to end its policy of refusing to fund coal and natural gas plants in

underdeveloped countries. One of the reasons they remain poor is that they lack adequate electricity to power their economies. Force-feeding them a steady diet of unreliable wind and solar power, as the World Bank and other lending agencies prefer, is guaranteed to prolong their poverty.

Though it won't happen overnight, revitalizing America's long-stagnant nuclear power industry is another way to promote U.S. energy independence and create a template for other countries to follow. The domestic industry is hamstrung by a dysfunctional Nuclear Regulatory Commission, outdated regulations, and government subsidies that favor wind and solar power. As a result, building a nuclear plant in the United States is prohibitively expensive and takes twice as long as it should.

Untangling the reams of red tape is a tall order, but sensible nuclear regulatory policies exist elsewhere. As the Heritage Foundation recently reported, "South Korea built 19 reactors while reducing costs by 13 percent between 1989 and 2008."

By turning away from climate shakedowns, mandates and handouts, the Trump administration can improve the lives of Americans and show developing countries that there are better ways to improve their lot.

Bonner R. Cohen is a senior policy adviser with the Committee for a Constructive Tomorrow CFACT



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Sen. Rand Paul’s Annual ‘Festivus’ Report: A Whopping \$1,008,313,329,626.12 Of Government Waste *Cont.*

(Continued from page 3)

Because Who Needs a Secure U.S. Border, Anyway? The Department of State (DOS) spent \$2.1 million for Paraguayan Border Security.

Forever Fauci – he Funded Feline COVID Experiments: The National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) spent \$2.24 million on COVID experiments.

Big Bird Goes to Baghdad: The Agency for International Development (USAID) is spending \$20 million on “Ahlan Simsim” a new Sesame Street show in Iraq.

And from the “you can’t make this \$%!* up” file, **Dragging Tax Dollars onto Thin Ice:** The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) awarded the Bearded Ladies Cabaret a \$10,000 grant to support a cabaret show on ice skates focused on climate change.

I’d say “enjoy this report” except it’s not meant to be enjoyed. Be very angry about it and support the incoming Trump DOGE agency which together with President Donald Trump, has the potential to transform how government is run.

Oh, Merry Christmas and Happy Festivus.

Katy Grimes, the Editor in Chief of the California Globe, is a long-time Investigative Journalist covering the California State Capitol, and the co-author of California’s War Against Donald Trump: Who Wins? Who Loses?

Andy Caldwell Thanks You!



He’s a government watchdog, taxpayer, business and traditional values advocate, and the Executive Director of COLAB.

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My Psychic Predictions For 2025 *Cont.*

(Continued from page 2)

year effort to get this project approved in the city – and believe me, he’s trying – the builder has reserved the nuclear option that Bob can’t stop. This is known as “the builder’s remedy” based on a state law that gives the developer the absolute right to build an alternative development on the site that nobody, including Bob, wants. In other words, while Bob is engaged in a game of checkers, the developer is playing three-dimensional chess.

County Supervisor **Laura Capps**, who has never had a job in the private sector, is going to want the county to hire everybody in the county so that they too can enjoy government largesse. Just recently, for starters, she inquired as to whether the contractor who provides janitorial services to the county pays its employees a living wage with good benefits. If not, she wants the county to hire its own janitorial staff. Currently, the county is on track to have 5,000 employees, almost all of whom earn upwards of 30% or more than their private sector counterparts, not to mention pension benefits that are orders of magnitude more lucrative than the Social Security benefits the private sector earns in retirement, none of which matters to Capps.



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