

Commentary

Food bank plays a vital role locally

By Dr. Nan Mickiewicz and Jess Brown
Special to the Sentinel

Jeff Simpson is a hard-working guy. He does maintenance for affordable-housing properties, full time, and since his rent eats up over 60 percent of his paycheck, he finds handyman work on weekends. His rent is about to go up another 20 percent, so he may have to move. He found a unit available above a garage, but it needs renovating, and he'd have to do it himself. He's about to turn 60.

At Second Harvest Food Bank, we're hearing such stories more and more. People who have built their lives in Santa Cruz County, who work hard, often for long hours, finding themselves unable to afford necessities like shelter and food. They're facing choices like moving into an illegal granny unit, cutting back even further on food or medication, or moving out of the community where they have built their lives.

First the housing bubble of the mid-2000s made shelter harder to afford. Then the Great Recession put many out of work or put them close to the edge. And now the economy is improving, but many workers are not seeing the benefits.

Even though Jeff is not eligible for the county's first line of defense against hunger, CalFresh, the state's food-assistance program, he does have access to a program that brings fruits, vegetables, and healthy portions of advice on cooking and nutrition to low-income families. "Passion For Produce" also fills an important need in the community, bringing nutritious foods to families that normally can't afford them, and the group support needed to maintain healthy lifestyles changes.

Because when hard choices cause people to fill up on cheap calories or skip meals, they can't do their jobs well, and their children can't concentrate in school. Productivity drops, social problems increase, the health care system gets overwhelmed, costs rise for everyone — the effects ripple outward. Together Second Harvest's Passion For Produce and CalFresh Outreach programs are more than a safety net for families — they are a safety net for the whole community.

On a recent Friday afternoon, Jeff is attending the bi-weekly Passion For Produce session at Neary Lagoon Co-Op Housing, one of 30 Passion For Produce sites around the county. Amid boxes of celery, carrots, pears, oranges, and more, AmeriCorps volunteer Josie Thomas leads a group discussion on health and obesity. Then the participants select some healthy produce to take home and prepare for their families.

Jeff relies on the food and nutrition he gets here, but he doesn't want it for free, so despite the long hours he already works, he volunteers another eight hours a month for the program he knows is so critical.

Would he rather not have to rely on it? Would he rather that the work he does fixing appliances, solving plumbing problems, and keeping people's houses and apartments in good working order allow him to cover the rent and buy enough food?

Of course. But until we find ways to make Santa Cruz County a more affordable place to live for everyone who works so hard to make it the wonderful place it is, the community will still need The Food Bank — and The Food Bank will still need you.

Please find out how you can volunteer, donate, or advocate to help Second Harvest end hunger in our community at www.thefoodbank.org.

Dominican President and CEO Dr. Nan Mickiewicz and Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau Executive Director Jess Brown are holiday co-chairs at Second Harvest Food Bank Santa Cruz County.

Commentary

Cemetery project appreciated, but story behind it more nuanced

By Carrie Zeidman
Special to the Sentinel

I'm writing in response to the article "Thousands buried in mass, unmarked Live Oak grave honored with memorial" published on Dec. 16. I want to start by saying how very much I appreciate the work done to clean up and transform the Old Holy Cross Cemetery, and the long hours put in to find the names of those buried in the mass grave. The cemetery looks beautiful.

However, there are a few issues in the article that are not accurate, and statements made that are offensive to many of us who descend from the Spanish in Santa Cruz.

First a little history. Several members of my family came to California with the DeAnza expedition, settled in the Santa Cruz area, and have played a major part in the history of the area for almost 250 years. Approximately 40 of the graves at the Old Holy Cross Cemetery are my ancestors. Some of them, like my great, great, great grandparents Sebastian Rodriguez and Perfecta de la Luz Pacheco, are buried in the mass grave. The street on which the cemetery sits is named after my family. I've spent many years

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researching California history in general, and my family's history in particular. Some of that time involved walking through the cemetery, mapping and documenting the graves of my family.

There were a few statements that I found troubling in the published article. First, the blanket accusation by a tribal representative that the Spanish "beat the men and raped the women" is akin to saying that all Native Americans were savages and killers. The truth is more nuanced than that. There were some among the Spanish who abused the natives, but it was not the norm. While it was not always followed, there was a law against forcing the natives to convert, and most of them came to the mission of their own accord. Admittedly, some priests were cruel. Some, such as Father Andres Quintana, who in 1812 was killed by the natives un-

der his charge, were particularly cruel. Yes, this happened, but to present it as a normal behavior by the Spanish is not fair or correct.

Secondly, the statement that the Catholic church thought that the natives "had no soul" is just wrong. There was some questioning by the church before the priests were sent to the new world as to whether the natives had souls, but one should keep in mind the times they were living in. The natives were different and mysterious. In the end, it was decided that they did indeed have souls, and the main purpose for developing the missions was to save those souls. You can argue whether they were right or wrong in their methods, but there would have been no reason to convert them if the church thought there was no soul to save.

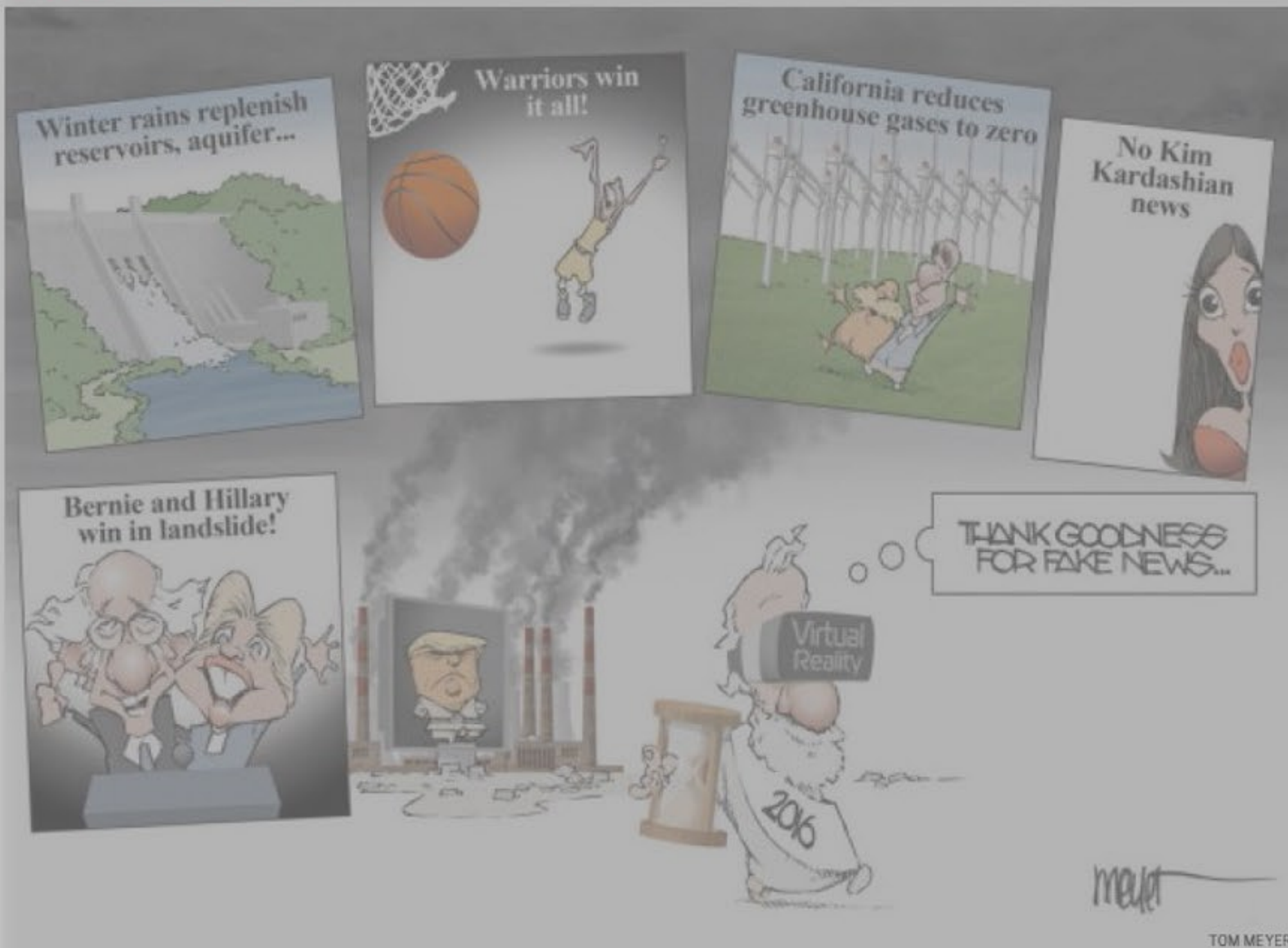
Lastly, the author of the article makes the case that the

bodies that were moved were treated disrespectfully. That "the body parts were loaded like cord wood into 17 wagons, transported across town, dumped into a hole in Holy Cross Cemetery and promptly forgotten for more than a century." The job of moving that many bodies was a massive undertaking. Wagons were the mode of transportation at that time, and would be the only way to move the bodies to the new cemetery grounds. Why the mass grave? It could be that the job of reburying over 2,400 people in individual graves was too big a task. Without evidence, I think it's unfair to say that they were unceremoniously "dumped" into the grave. The bodies they were reburying were not just natives, a large percentage were European.

Again, I am grateful for the care and attention given to the cemetery, and that its historical significance is being recognized. It's a beautiful tribute to the Native Americans and founding families of Santa Cruz. I would just like to see all the ancestors treated with respect.

Carrie Zeidman is an artist, photographer and amateur historian.

Cartoonist's take



Commentary

The 2017 'precap' — next year's news, today

By Peter Funt
Special to the Sentinel

Thanks to Donald Trump and the Chicago Cubs my outlandish predictions for 2016 were eclipsed by, of all things, reality. Worse, the fine art of fake news was commandeered by demons who used it for social and political gain — something my colleagues and I would never have dreamed possible. Never mind the recap. Here's a handy clip 'n' save "precap" of news certain to occur in 2017.

Jan. 1: President Obama rings in the New Year by making good on his pledge to "assist President-elect Trump in any way possible" as he signs the lease for an apartment in Trump Tower.

Jan. 20: Chief Justice John Roberts looks on as Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey administers a 140-character version of the oath of office to the nation's 45th president.

Jan. 21: At the administration's first White House press briefing, a correspondent from Breitbart News asks for comment on reports that "millions of illegal immigrants are using fraudulent manufacturers' coupons, making it impossible for honest Americans to get their fair share at the supermarket."

Feb. 5: In Houston, the Super Bowl halftime show is delayed

38 minutes while Lady Gaga's ability to stay on key is tested as part of the NFL's strict new Music Protocol.

Feb. 18: President Trump travels to Moscow to attend groundbreaking ceremonies for a Trump Hotel and Casino. Trump pledges the project "will create as many as 900 new jobs."

March 22: CNN expands its roster of paid Trump apologists to include David Buono, head pro at Mar-a-Lago.

April 2: President Trump tells Sean Hannity that his cabinet "will rotate in a way I learned at dinner parties." Every three months, cabinet members will move two seats to their right: so that Ben Carson, for example, having served three months as Housing Secretary, will spend the next three months as Secretary of State, and so forth.

April 26: Samsung releases its Galaxy Note 8 with a built-in Smoke Alarm app.

May 4: According to Breitbart News, Barack Obama will build his presidential library in Nairobi, Kenya.

June 14: Hillary Clinton announces she is reluctantly dropping her effort to overturn election results in Michigan. "It's time to move on," she tells reporters, "so we can focus on challenges in Pennsylvania and Wisconsin."

June 15: Ivanka Trump ap-

pears at the Neiman Marcus in Scottsdale, Arizona, to launch her Baby Trump line of resort wear for affluent Republican toddlers.

July 20: Breitbart News publishes emails from Nancy Pelosi's doctor revealing that the House Minority Leader suffers from addictions to marijuana and Starbucks' Pumpkin Spice Lattes.

July 25: The White House abruptly cancels an order for three KOHLER Santa Rosa Comfort Height Elongated 1.28 GPF toilets after President Trump complains that the Obama Administration failed to negotiate a favorable deal.

July 26: House Speaker Paul Ryan says Wisconsin-based Kohler could suffer "irreparable damage."

Aug. 2: Six reporters from the Huffington Post travel to Wisconsin to probe Toiletgate.

Aug. 3: In a phone call to "Fox & Friends," reinstated Trump says he has reinstated the toilet deal and sweetened it with tax breaks after obtaining a pledge that Kohler will never, ever, contemplate leaving Kohler, Wisconsin.

Oct. 13: In Stockholm, the Nobel Prize in Literature is awarded to Miley Cyrus.

Nov. 8: President Trump visits the Barnes & Noble on Fifth Avenue in Manhattan to sign cop-

ies of a book containing his campaign speeches titled "The Art of the Spiel."

Nov. 23: Donald Trump becomes the first president in modern history to deny clemency to the National Turkey on Thanksgiving. "There will be no pardons until each bird is properly vetted," he tweets. "We don't even know where these turkeys are coming from!"

Nov. 24: At a rally carried live by CNN, FNC and MSNBC, Alt-right leader Richard Spencer tells a crowd of 18 people in North Carolina that repeated use of the term Black Friday is "an effort by left wing media to make white Americans feel disenfranchised on the nation's most sacred shopping day."

Dec. 1: President and Mrs. Trump begin a month-long holiday at the new Trump Hotel and Casino in Kaohsiung, Taiwan. Vice President and Mrs. Pence travel to the Holiday Inn Express in Indianapolis.

Dec. 31: With the entire Trump Administration still on vacation, Designated Survivor Kellyanne Conway offers New Year's greetings via Mark Zuckerberg's new channel FFNN, the Facebook Fake News Network.

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