

## 'Orgy of consumerism'

Re "Demand a better climate change plan" (Guest comment, by Mark Stemen, Aug. 22):

There probably was a time when we had "10 years to save the planet." But by 1980, the modern environmental movement was dead in the cradle. We coasted through the next four decades reciting the mantra, "I recycle." At no point in that 40 years did we have an adult conversation about real sacrifice—and that conversation remains off limits.

Environmental initiatives from academia are largely academic, as is obvious in the carbon footprint of any college campus: Faculty and staff international jet-setting, alone, incinerates enough oil to make Red Adair roll over in his grave. "Helicoptering" parents burn more oil than the People's Republic of Bangladesh. Cafeteria choices remain decidedly zoocentric. If anything serious were happening at Chico State, or any university, we'd see significant lifestyle change.

And, it's true that we can't rely on government to get it done. Why? We hire them (it's called "democracy") and as much as we'd like to think this is not in our control, we don't want government orchestrating an 80 percent cut in consumption; that is, the deep structural change needed to bring us into a sane relationship with the Earth.

So far, we've opted for an orgy of consumerism—with windmills, where possible. All else remains unthinkable.

Patrick Newman  
Chico

## Deeply concerning plan

Re "Lights out" (Newsline, by Ashiah Scharaga, Aug. 8):

Watching 20 speakers consecutively trash Police Chief Mike O'Brien's wildly unprecedented proposal was fun for those of us typically critical of the local police.

Still, this is deeply concerning. Not only is O'Brien prepared to suck all public funds into a standing army, but he also seems

eager to move toward normalizing martial law.

A couple of City Council members expressed interest in alternative ways to ensure public safety, so I thought this worth sharing: Recently, I was doing research and visited the Mexican city of Cherán. Like much of its surrounding region, Cherán was ridden with crime before a 2011 insurrection incited by illegal logging. They ended up banishing the police and political parties, electing instead to govern themselves by neighborhood assemblies, and organizing modestly paid community patrols. It now vies for the safest municipality in the country. I asked a member of the patrols why they were so successful, and, without need to ponder, he responded: They patrol only their own neighborhood, where everyone knows who they are.

Chico has a lot of problems to solve. Police violence is one of them, and others require money; so

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