

15 MINUTES

Merging worlds

Jenny Rae Richman (well, that's her human name, anyway) was working in tech in the Bay Area when she decided she'd had enough of dealing with computers and screens all day. She'd found it convenient to help cover the region's high cost of living, but her real passion was working as a professional faerie with the Faerie Human Relations Department. Better known by her faerie name, Pepper Mint Whimsy, she's been working for the fae government as a human relations expert for the last three years. As such, she hosts parties for young humans to build bonds and relations. Recently, she decided it was time to open her own branch in Chico, and on Oct. 1, she obtained her business license and officially opened her Faerie Human Relations Department in Chico as a party hosting service. Richman offers face-painting, balloon-twisting and casual magic services, while in character. Check out her website at faeriehumanrelations.com, or call (408) 966-4831 for questions or to book party services.

Why the big career change?

I was working in the tech industry ... for a while—I know it seems silly, a faerie in technology—but I just couldn't help myself. And with all those people



PHOTO BY JOSH COZINE

just on top of one another, everything was just so crowded and there was just so much. I don't know quite how to describe it, but being in front of one of those computer screens all day, it was driving me mad, and I wanted to do something better with my life. And, you know, I always had a passion for human studies when I went to faerie school, and I decided, *Why not get into that?*

Why did you decide to go out on your own?

Faerie-human relations have been going downhill for quite some time, and it's important that humans continue to believe in faeries—we all know what happens when humans say they don't believe in faeries—we just start disappearing left and right and that's really sad. It got a little worrisome, so I decided to open up an official faerie government branch of the Faerie

Human Relations Department.

Where did you first learn how to practice faerie-human relations and why bring it to Chico?

I worked for a company in the Bay Area called Happily Ever Laughter for over three years as a professional faerie doing faerie-human relations. Eventually, I decided I wanted to start my own branch in a smaller place, and I knew some humans here.

What's your favorite thing about hosting children's parties?

I love the questions that children ask. I love the moment when the skeptical child becomes a believer and is there with me. I just think that there is so much cynicism and not enough who believe and know that all the things in our imagination are really powerful. And that's what I want to bring, and so when I see that, that's my favorite moment.

—JOSH COZINE

THE GOODS

Predictions for 2020



by
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I don't know about you, but 2020 is looking better and better every day. I remember this time last year, looking forward to a 2019 filled with renewal and rebuilding after the terror that befell us in 2018. While yes, we did experience some of that, 2019 really wasn't so much a year of renewal as it was an extension of its predecessor, filled more with healing than actual movement.

Here are a few of my predictions for 2020. Some are based on announcements already made; others on mere conjecture. I'd love to hear your thoughts on what the new year might bring. Email 'em to me at meredithc@newsreview.com.

- **Planet Fitness** will finally take down the **Chico Mall** food court. The place has been a sad destination for as long as I can remember. Bonus: **Cinnabon** will give mall-walking a whole new purpose (to work off those calories!).
- **Forever 21** will close, but despite promises to reinvent the space, both it and the former **Sears** anchor location at the mall will remain vacant.
- Chico will get its first cannabis dispensary. I'm predicting one to start, likely somewhere on the outskirts of town, like by the airport. It'll be in the spotlight at first, but once the dust settles, the naysayers will forget it's there and why they cared so much in the first place.
- East Second Street will remain a desert. With three major vacancies on the north side—two with water damage—two on the south, and construction eating up sidewalk outside of **Panama Bar Cafe**, people will have little reason to venture that way, except to dine at **Grana**.
- Someone will snatch up the **Kona's Sandwiches** shop downtown and turn it into a Jewish deli (my personal wish) with killer matzo ball soup, pastrami and potato latkes.
- The so-called "gig economy" will shrink. This is thanks to Assembly Bill 5, aimed at rideshare companies **Uber** and **Lyft**, which classify their drivers as independent contractors who don't qualify for benefits, time off or even minimum wage. There already are lawsuits in the works, so my bet is Uber and Lyft are gonna do just fine; but their drivers may fall out (making way for more legit cabs in town?). The bigger problem, however, is the ripple effect will be huge, affecting a slew of other independent contractors and the small businesses that hire them. It's definitely not going to help Butte County's shortage of construction workers.
- **Dave and Busters** reportedly was eyeing a spot at the Chico Mall and backed out short of making a deal. But nobody said the adult arcade master had abandoned Chico altogether. I predict it turns its gaze to the soon-to-be-empty **Kmart**, which is in a prime location by other dining and entertainment, has plenty of parking and is just itching to be filled with something better than, well, Kmart. (If another large retailer like **Target** wanted to set up shop there, that'd be fine, too—the north side of town is in dire need of some affordable, catch-all shopping.)

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