

by JASON CASSIDY • jasonc@newsreview.com



THE STICKS Here's a joke: What's brown and sticky? A stick! (It's not really funny, which is why it's so funny.)

The stick joke never gets old to **Arts DEVO**. Also, **The Stick** never gets old to me. More than once I've blathered in this space about the cheap thrill I get when I return to the scene of some out-of-place oddity that I've previously stumbled upon and find that it's still there. The longer it stays, the more intense the rush. I might get too excited. Worse, I've poisoned **Mrs. DEVO** with my passion for the inane. For example, if I asked her, "I wonder if The Stick is still there?" She would drop everything, and we would speed away in the car giggling like schoolkids on a weekend adventure.

Where is The Stick? It's caught in the power lines above West 20th Street off Park Avenue in Chico (see photo).

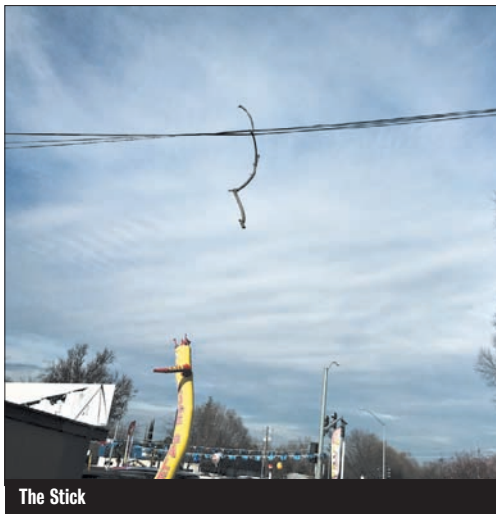
Why is it such a big deal? It's been there for more than three years!!! How? Why? It's kind of wedged between a couple of lines, but it's a small piece of dead wood, maybe 1-inch in diameter. It's not a branch. It's not even a limb. It's a twig! Think about some of the strong winds we've had, the supercell storms, the brutal sun of three North Valley summers and the rains of three winters? It should not be possible. Yet it remains. Every time we are fiending for the best tater tots in town—at **Park Avenue Pub** on the same block—and we round that corner, it's always there, and I usually blurt out, "How!?"

I simply like that it's here with us, and I'll be sad the day gravity finally takes it. I goofed around the web a bit trying to find something to add color to a column about sticks, and found a wonderful poem by English writer **Mark Waldron** (find his books online at bloodaxebooks.com) that, somewhat miraculously, gets the point across. Here's the first part:

"The Stick" (an excerpt): *Existence trumps nonexistence every time. It has/all the colors and all the shapes and all the moves/it is rude in its bounty and its grotesque reach that/overcomes all before it. This bit of stick I found in/the park was showing off because the dead can't have it./ They can't have any of it. It was sticky and prickled/with a showy, dazzling presence ...*

There's also this whole other stick story at the center my and Mrs. DEVO's life. It's about **Stick** (not to be confused with *The Stick*), the trekking pole that I found under a boulder during a grueling day-long hike up and down **Half Dome** in **Yosemite National Park**. With a hip injury hampering her descent, my wife's trip was saved by Stick, which became something of a symbol of that and future outdoor excursions. I'd tell you about the song that celebrates our adventures together called "Stick" that the missus wrote for me and sang in front of bar full of friends and family for my 50th birthday, but then I'd just start crying ... again.

SAD BREAKING NEWS On the CN&R's deadline, I got word that two form Chicoans were among the 24 who were killed when tornadoes tore thro' Tennessee on Tuesday (March 3). **Albree Sexton** and **Mike Dolfini** used to w at **Argus Bar + Patio** in Chico before moving in 2018. According to a story in the Tennessean, the couple were leaving the Nashville bar where Dolfir worked when the tornado landed. Details are scant at this point, but I'll share info on memorials, etc., as it's made available.



The Stick

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