

What were they thinking?

A quick rundown of 2021's screw-ups and head-scratchers

Paging Dr. Feelbad: Enloe Medical Center ER physician Dr. Lamont Leavitt allegedly shared propaganda with a patient that called the COVID-19 pandemic a hoax and lambasted masks and social distancing.

Ted Nugent can write the anthem: Declaring its jurisdiction “constitutional republic,” the Oroville City Council stated in a resolution that the city would oppose federal and state orders it considers government overreach. The cause: COVID restrictions, naturally.

Sound legal advice needed: Had the Chico City

Council listened to lawyers, advocates, service providers and clear legal precedent asserting that unhoused people actually do have civil rights, there would likely be no Warren v. City of Chico federal lawsuit.

Bureaucracy 101: The Federal Emergency Management Agency spent over \$300,000 per trailer in its Chico temporary housing development for Camp Fire survivors, according to The Washington Post. With the FEMA trailers and that money now gone, and many of the poorest survivors of the wildfire still precariously housed or homeless, wouldn't it have made way more sense to direct such funding toward permanent housing?

District 8? Though it was difficult to discern residency between her purported “decoy” homes and the two successive addresses former Chico City Councilwoman Kami Denlay listed on her voter registration before resigning, one residence was certain: her recently purchased house in Red Bluff, 40 miles east and one county over from Chico's District 3.

Compassion police: Attorney Rob Berry's call to perform citizen's arrests on then-Councilman Scott Huber and other homeless helpers prompted a Chico Police Department press release telling people that's a bad idea.

Airport Resting Site in June.
PHOTO BY KEN SMITH

Camp Tarmac: A federal judge's take on Chico's Airport Resting Site boondoggle: “It is an asphalt tarmac with no roof and no walls, no water and no electricity. It is an open space with what amounts to a large umbrella for some shade. It affords no real cover or protection to anyone.”

Quarterback sneak: Chico's Aaron Rodgers has done a lot of good in the pandemic (and for wildfire survivors) with his NFL millions. His “I'm immunized” doubletalk—and double down after contracting COVID—did more harm than good however, and tarnished his reputation.

Takesy-backsy? In October, Chico State's University Communications office sent an email to the campus community announcing the death of Professor Emerita Harriet Spiegel, including quotes of remembrance from her colleagues. It would've been a lovely gesture were it not for the fact that Spiegel was, by her own admission, alive and well. The office apologized.

Morgan muzzled: Never one to mince words, Councilman Sean Morgan got a federal judge's attention when, during a radio interview, he disparaged plaintiffs and was a little too candid with details of the closed-door discussions of an ongoing lawsuit. A court order has city officials, including Morgan, on a tight leash.

I do re-declare: Conservative council members let



Chico police arresting homeless activist Robert Van Fleet March 2.
PHOTO BY KEN SMITH

Chico's shelter crisis declaration expire on June 30 despite hearing its benefits. Surprise! The city needs the benefits, so they redeclared three months later.

Re-do is what we do, apparently: On a spur-of-the-moment vote at the Sept. 21 meeting, City Council conservatives downgraded the Climate Action Commission to an ad hoc committee ... until public outcry prompted a reversal at the next meeting.

Ice Town: The pitch: Fence off City Plaza; guzzle water in a drought year to create a holiday ice rink; give a middle finger to Paradise. Council conservatives: Take our money!

“Integrity, courage, respect”: A cadre of police officers hauling away a 74-year-old protester in handcuffs in front of City Council Chambers—for the offense of lying down—wasn't the greatest display of the Chico Police Department's stated core values.

—CN&R staff

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