

OPINION

THE LEDGER INDEPENDENT

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Good riddance, 2021

It's New Year's again and time to hope for a happier future.

Last year at this time we were hoping for a better year in 2021, but that sure as heck didn't work out, did it?

Forget the damage done to the economy by the hapless and relentlessly clueless "Joe Biden" regime.

Forget the Biden-made disasters at the Mexican border and in Afghanistan.

The worst mistakes the Biden administration made were in its failed "War on COVID."

Biden, Dr. Fauci, the blue state governors, the CDC and the government's so-called public health experts were wrong about everything – the high cost of lockdowns, the efficacy and safety of vaccines, the protection provided by cloth masks, the benefits of social distancing, boosters, mask mandates, vaccine mandates....

What's left?

Whatever it is, if it had anything to do with fighting the virus in 2021, the Biden administration and its panic-pushing cheerleaders in the mainstream liberal media got it wrong.

Whether you're masked or unmasked, vaxxed or unvaxxed, or holed up 24/7 in your basement, COVID or one of its variants is eventually going to get you.

I've done everything I'm supposed to do to stay safe. I wear a mask when told. I've been vaccinated. I'll get my first booster next month.

But after two years of following the strict and ever-changing rules, I look around and see most public places in Los Angeles closing down again because of omicron, a variant that is more transmissible but not nearly as dangerous as the original strain of COVID-19.

I also see long lines of people waiting to get a COVID test. I think to myself, they don't look sick.

If you're slightly sick, if you've got the sniffles and a cough and a little temperature, do you really need to get tested immediately for COVID – and possibly infect other people with whatever you have while you stand in line?

Shouldn't you just stay home

and take some therapeutics until you see whether it's really COVID, the flu or, more likely, just one of about 200 cold viruses out there we can catch?

I'm no Dr. Fauci, but I do know a lot of people have lost their minds during our government's losing battle against COVID.

The other day I was having lunch with my daughter in a restaurant and when they sat us down, a mother and her grown-up son at the table next to us just about had a heart attack.

We were wearing our masks. But they called over the manager and said, "We have to move. We're too close!"

The son nodded to me as he left, signaling "My mother's crazy. Don't worry about her."

But then the table next to them also moved away. Pretty soon there wasn't a table within 20 yards of us.

If that older woman was that paranoid – and clueless – about catching COVID in a restaurant, why was she even out of her house?

Likewise, if you're that terrified of getting COVID on an airplane, why are you even on a plane? Get in your car and drive to where you're going – or stay home.

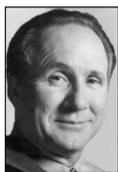
In 2021 we learned many important lessons about what works and doesn't work in the failed war against COVID.

As we enter 2022 filled with the hope that we've learned from our mistakes, we've recently discovered that COVID vaccines – originally touted (and pushed) by Biden, Dr. Fauci and the panic media as the magic medical bullets that would save us all – don't actually protect you from catching the virus. Sometimes catching it twice.

At best, it appears the vaccines and their boosters only stop you from getting deathly ill.

In two years more than 800,000 Americans have died of or with COVID. We can safely predict that no matter what we do thousands of additional COVID-related deaths are coming in 2022.

So be careful. Stay safe. Don't let the frightened people run or ruin your life. And have yourself a happy New Year – if they let us.



MICHAEL REAGAN



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Time for a decision on solar question

Dear editor,

On Dec 29, 2021, Joint Planning Commission attorney Michael Clarke said the evidence collected at the Nov. 16 and 18, 2021 solar public hearing will not be compiled in time for the regularly scheduled Jan 5, 2022, JPC meeting. He expects the JPC members will receive it before a February meeting. Stated another way 48 days was not enough time for our officials to compile the official record for approximately 10 hours of public hearing testimony. JPC deliberation will have been delayed by 76 days if instead, they are able to consider solar at their Feb 2, 2022 regularly scheduled meeting.

This delay in documenting the public hearings is indicative of why solar will have already been under discussion for over 1,000 days. During this time our city/county officials have researched solar, the JPC has conducted several "workshops," visited a solar energy system in Ohio, and held two well-attended meetings for public comment. In addition, three

companies, interested in developing Mason County's solar energy, held meetings to answer the public's questions about their proposed developments. One company even established a local office, ear-

lier in 2021, to be available to answer the public's questions.

Community members have established both pro-solar and anti-solar groups. In 2021, both groups have robustly supported their position with among other things, Facebook groups, letters to the editor, countywide mailings, parade floats, along with vehicle and yard signs. In addition, the pro-solar group invited the stop-solar group to a 30-minute discussion on WFTM. Sadly the stop solar group did not show up for that open discussion.

It is time for a decision. Over 30 years of operation, 6,000 acres of well-regulated solar will (at 2019 tax rates) contribute \$14 million additional real-estate property tax to our local tax districts. By replacing cash grain with sod plus storm-water control structures, solar will reduce topsoil loss and ag chemical pollution, as well the risk of flash floods downstream. In addition during construction solar will provide hundreds of skilled jobs. Then during the operation phase, solar will require more labor than current ag enterprises.

Since 1960 Mason County's population has declined by more than 1,400 residents. A drive through our rural areas shows a dramatic conversion of farmland into personal

housing, as well as commercial buildings, since 1960. Utility-Scale Solar provides an economic basis to stop this urban-type development into rural areas.

Citizens Voice of Mason County Inc. has so far accomplished the goal that their signs state. They have stopped solar regulation for over 1,000 days. When we examine their F(ear) U(certainty) and D(oubt) claims, we find only a few with merit. Everyone agrees that solar should be screened from occupied buildings and that during construction, noise and road traffic will increase.

Our county's delay in adopting appropriate solar regulations increases the risk Mason County will never benefit from solar. Each electric transmission line passed through many locales. Many of which actively pursue a vibrant "green" economy. As other locales fill the transmission lines that pass through Mason County, our solar opportunity will be lost.

If you believe solar provides a path to a vibrant "green" economy, please let your officials know. If not then please propose an alternative that can do as much for our ecological and financial future. But in any case, I hope you will use your voice to call for a decision

Charles W (Bill) Marshall
 Maysville

Remember the Las Vegas vampire?

Many of you just watched the late Darren McGavin as Ralphie's father in the umpteenth rerun of 1983's "A Christmas Story," but we're approaching the 50th anniversary of another iconic McGavin role.



DANNY TYREE

On January 11, 1972, ABC aired "The Night Stalker" – which entered the American psyche as the highest-rated made-for-TV movie up until that time.

Granted, the film was aided by being nestled between "The Mod Squad" and "Marcus Welby, M.D." and competing against a "crowd-pleasing" NBC documentary about Northern Ireland factions (apparently NBC's documentary about post-nasal drip wasn't completed in time); but it was a milestone, nonetheless.

It was impossible for discriminating viewers to say no to the movie. The screenplay was by Richard Matheson (famed as author of "I Am Legend" and the screenwriter of 16 "Twilight Zone" episodes) and the producer was Dan Curtis, the creator of the gothic soap opera "Dark Shadows" (which etched the image of Rev. Trask being sealed alive inside a wall into the memories of a generation).

In those days before social media and "watch it when-

ever" streaming, "The Night Stalker" was the sort of shared experience that dominated officer water cooler conversations and school playground chatter on January 12.

McGavin portrayed Carl Kolchak, a down-on-his-luck investigative journalist digging into serial killings that plagued Las Vegas – serial killings that seemed more and more the work of a vampire. The wise-cracking Kolchak got on the wrong side of the Powers That Be because news of a blood-sucker in town could dampen the tourist trade. (That's the same reason the buffet for the annual Extended Warranty Association convention is always sequestered in a secret room.)

Although "The Night Stalker" broke ratings records, spawned follow-up TV-movie "The Night Strangler," generated the 1974-75 series "Kolchak: The Night Stalker," inspired Fox's "The X-Files" and garnered a cult following, nitpickers like to nitpick.

Some whine about the shoe-string budget, even though director John Llewellyn Moxey did a masterful job of building suspense within his financial constraints. Shoe-string budgets were the reality, and network executives tried to economize even more. ("Are you sure you need the little plastic thingies on the

end of the shoestrings? You're killing me!")

Yes, viewers spoiled by modern special effects might be underwhelmed by the simplicity of the film. But those people would even find fault with heaven. ("There's no CGI? Forget that! Give me a ticket to the other place.")

Filmgoers addicted to today's standards of gore might bemoan the restrained nature of the movie, but the Network Standards and Practices people had spent 20-plus years protecting viewers from disturbing elements. ("Quick! More parents with dead spouses! More people smoking cancer sticks! But no karate chops!")

Some fume that vampire Janos Skorzeny wasn't given a more nuanced, sympathetic treatment. They wouldn't be satisfied unless Kolchak took along a social worker to coax the vampire into experiencing a "Wow! I could'a had a V8!" moment.

Like every year, 2022 will be a buyer's market for columnists wishing to write about cultural anniversaries; but I couldn't in good conscience pass up this occasion.

Not when "The Night Stalker" left such an indelible mark.

My trip to Las Vegas in the mid-90s is still a blur, but I was supposedly screaming, "Don't show me the room with the HIGH stakes – show me the one with the WOODEN stakes!"

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