

# OPINION

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## A two-tier society

While we can question the cultural sensitivity of using the Star of David at a contemporary protest, (*Union editorial, July 28*) there exist significant reasons why a medical freedom protestor might adopt it, reasons that have nothing to do with anti-Semitism.

Critics tend to overlook the fact that Nazi persecution did not start with the gas chambers.

It built to that unspeakable horror over many years. Public acceptance of propaganda that dehumanized the Jews, and

## ❖ LETTERS

programs that segregated them and took away their rights, typically using public health and "science" as justification, paved the way.

Over the last few years, we witnessed a mob mentality take hold that embraced bullying and the dehumanization of people who did not agree with the dominant Covid narrative. Many places rolled out vaccine passports and restrictions that amount to a two-tier society.

There were even calls for "quarantine camps" in New York. These attitudes and actions only lead to horror, if we accept them.

I highly recommend reading *Eichman in Jerusalem* and *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, by Hannah Arendt. You will gain invaluable insights into the tragedies of Nazi Germany, and learn for yourself the lessons it offers for today.

Everyone who wants to live in an ethical and humane world, needs to learn the sign posts of totalitarianism.

Amy Gustin  
Ettersburg

## Deflection, manipulation, gaslighting

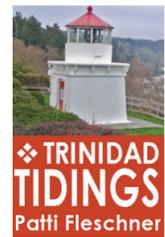
When Dana Quillman writes that "the wearing of the yellow star button is in no way a hate crime against Jews and that the people who are seeing it that way, are choosing to see it that way," she is deflecting any responsibility for the effects of her rhetoric.

There's a name for this kind of emotional manipulation: it's called gaslighting.

Mary Johnson Smith  
Arcata

## Lucy and Buttercup take to the roof as TBAM weekend rolls around

My three grandchildren have been trying to capture Trinidad resident goats Lucy and Buttercup in photographs for two summers. No luck.



❖ TRINIDAD TIDINGS  
Patti Fleschner

Last week I connected with Trinidad's Tracy Hardy, the goats' owner, who lives off Scenic Drive in the city limits. She shared her images above. Tracy assists autistic children.

She has discovered that the children find greeting and petting Lucy and Buttercup to be a highlight of their learning time.

For strolling visitors and motorists, observing the goats on the roof of their enclosure offers a priceless moment of rural amusement and enjoyment.

### Artists of TBAM

The hugely popular classical music concerts continue for the second weekend, August 12, 13 and 14 with world class music being performed at 8 p.m. each eve-



ning in the Town Hall and an Afternoon Baroque concert in the historic 1873 Holy Trinity Church on Hector Street at 2 p.m. on Aug. 14.

The musicians have been described in previous columns, however, readers should be reminded that five exceptional artists are featured in Town Hall as well.

Painters Matt Dodge, Reuben Mayes, Paul Rickard, Jeff Stanley and woodcarver Tom Allen all have their work on view and for sale during the TBAM Festival.

Festival organizer Vanessa Kibbe has been working the whole year with her board of directors to make the best in music and art possible for the community. She is greatly gratified by the warm and appreciative audience reactions so far.

Refreshments are available for sale courtesy of the Trinidad Civic Club. Go to [tbamfest.com](http://tbamfest.com) for concert and ticket information.

Email Patti at [baycity@sonic.net](mailto:baycity@sonic.net).

## The Humboldt Senior Softball League revitalizes a piece of Samoa

### Field of Dreams Part Two

In 2019, the Humboldt Senior Softball League got booted from its playing field at College of the Redwoods (the school needing the space for something more important, a building.) About that time, it occurred to somebody that the field in Samoa was unclaimed, and the President (at the time that was me) was sent out to have a look. There wasn't much to see.

For years, the field at Samoa sat in neglect with only occasional use. Weed patches clawed the hard infield dirt everywhere as if to claim the open ground since nobody else wanted it. Traces of a first base or a base path were non-existent. The backstop was mis-positioned, and the wood dugouts had been rotting so badly that they were ripped out and hauled off to the dump by the county for public safety.

Today — or that day — there was nothing left of the iconic ballpark but a sagging chain-link fence enclosing a gopher plantation, that is, the former outfield. The only thing still evoking the good times of the past was the phalanx of sturdy Monterey Pine trees bordering the left and center field fences, doing their assigned duty to hold back the dunes.

Across the street from the parking strip alongside right field, a low, newer split-rail fence had been put along the pavement's edge to mark the entrance into town, the only access road into Samoa. The eye follows this pleasant fence to the top of the hill just beyond the gym adjacent to the field where it simply stops, just dies in the brush. Then what happens?

Well, Danco and Partners, as most of us know by now, had purchased the whole town of Samoa with plans to craft an updated 21st century community out of a seriously run-down mill town, and give it, or leave it, with some of its unique, mill town feel — a reasonable project — and likely to make the investors a few bucks out of the deal.

They just might pull this off. And what role, if any, could Senior softball play in such an effort?

It wasn't a bad place. In fact, it was in some ways a wonderful place to have a ball field. From the dip in the landscape right there

where it was situated, you knew that beyond the row of Monterey Pines, looking west, less than a mile as the crow flies over those sand dune hills, the Pacific Ocean quivered in all its enormity.

But it took a whole lot imagination to appreciate that emotion because you also knew, from the spot on which you were standing, that the transformation of a run-down, used up softball field into a state of the art facility wasn't going to be easy.

But, then, we were seniors, that is, a collective of retired (some still active) construction workers as well as other occupations. We had masons, truck drivers, carpenters, gardeners, whatever was needed. Once we got the deal worked out with Dan Johnson, who volunteered a backhoe with an operator (his son) and a fence crew, we were on our way. Both Schmidbauer Lumber and The Mill Yard donated boards for forming the walkways and planks for new dugout benches. I don't know who paid for the concrete, maybe that was donated too. But good old Danco Builders put their cement finishers on the site the day it was poured, and they did a fine job.

And by Spring, there it was: a completely renovated, updated softball field held in perpetuity for us seniors (well for 30 years — reads the contract with Danco — a reasonable spell indeed for any of us who currently have a pulse. Ha. Ha. — we softball players love to describe ourselves that way because sometimes that's about all an injured player can contribute to his team to make a legal squad.)

Our work included installing new dugouts, new galvanized fencing, reworking the infield dirt, developing well-positioned base lines and permanent posts for the bases. We relocated the backstop to a proper distance from home plate (actually we just relocated home plate; it's kind of difficult to move a backstop.) A stands for spectators was installed. There was even a shaded area under some pines behind the left field dugout for players to gather after a game, perhaps to down a beer

and a hot dog. We thought of the field we were making as a destination point, not only for ourselves, but also for the locals for a pick-up softball game or for a team's practice, or a family picnic with a pick-up game, or simply an open place for a resident to chase the family dog in the outfield grass.

We enjoyed thinking how some resident of town would drive by in the afternoon or evening and capture in the fading light or falling fog a murder of geezers in black jerseys hopping about out in the grass — they would probably know one or two of them — those old guys in pursuit of a youth that runs faster than them, and which they will never catch up to but they look like they are having great fun pretending.

That first day I visited Samoa to inspect the field, I noticed across the split rail fence, down a grassy bank, a driveway parallel to the road with a quaint row of ten or so decrepit single-car garages like a motor court missing its other half, that is, the part with the kitchenette and double bed with minimal leg room around it and no place to put the suitcase, that part long gone, if it was ever there in the first place. To my eyes at least, the pug-ugly garages were somehow delightful to see down there, even breathtaking in a way, like seeing a piece of history undergoing its last period, just before sinking into the Past forever.

Up on top of the hill behind the garages, through a copse of very old and tall pine trees with clumps of moss hanging from their limbs, the huge parking lot of the Samoa Cookhouse stretched out in the bright sun without a single car on it in the middle of the day.

I went up there to examine the famous institution, built in 1893. At two stories (quite large for a little town like Samoa), the building appeared from up close to be sinking under its own weight. The red paint job cried out for a drink and the parched shingles were splitting and sagging under over-exposure and the relentless pressure from within of a slow, irreversible decline of the building's skeleton. And yet, this old icon of

the structure that contained the famous mill company's food concession remains steadfast today as if refusing to go down to Time and History.

Inside, on the first floor, there is the large dining hall with a logging museum in one room off to the side. Everybody eats the same meal served in the lumber camp fashion on plastic red and white checkered tablecloths draped over long tables set close together in rows with matching period chairs — most of us have eaten there at least once, I expect, since a trip to the Samoa Cookhouse is practically a requirement of belongingness in Humboldt (as well as a primary destination for tourists.)

The beaded wood ceiling (no sheetrock in 1893) painted creamy yellow, is recessed in between gigantic girders (also painted) that run the length of the room with propeller fans dangling down at intervals, supplied with external mold wiring (no electricity then either) making you feel, while standing in the vast dining hall, that you have not gone back into the past exactly, but Time is still ticking away in this place, that is, as long as the night watchman doesn't forget to wind up the grandfather clock in the museum before going home after his shift.

On a sunny afternoon in July, 2022, the Seniors having finished their midday Saturday practice, some of them still milling about eating one of Fred's hot dogs or grilled veggies, the two teams arriving began to gather for a scrimmage game. It was to be the Co-op employees against the Wildberries employees who had signed on to use the field that day and they were not in any way senior softball players. How quickly and with such natural grace did these young fellows move about like they'd been doing it (playing sports) since age 7 and hadn't forgotten a thing. It was such a pleasure to witness their pleasure at the exercise of their sublime fitness at age 28,

It was a pleasure also to look across the road where the dilapidated garages had been removed and see a row of newish cars lined up in their place. Nearby, in a clearing across the road to the north that leads to the Cookhouse some people were gathered about

near a tent with facing folding chairs. A bell rang and a two-car open-sided trolley appeared coming down the railroad tracks with a trainload of local tourists, a mix of couples, families with children, retired folks. This group unloaded and the next one of a similar complexion boarded, eager for their bayside adventure.

The leisurely trip into "nature" travels through an opening in the thick brush alongside a seldom used bypass road that goes underneath the Samoa bridge. An occasional egret plodded about in the Humboldt Bay shallows looking the other way, as if they couldn't be bothered with the noisy operation going on back there on the railroad tracks. Wasn't that thing abandoned long ago — you imagine them wondering, "Ah, Humans! What will they think of next?" — The train comes to an abrupt end somewhere this side of Manilla, then makes the return trip at the same speed (speed? the cars, actually called "speeders," hauled loggers into the woods and back in the 19th century). The entire trolley trip lasts 30 minutes, a first-of-its-kind ride on the rails brought to you by the Timber Heritage Association.

The Humboldt Senior Softball Association helped make all this happen by taking on a role as one of energy drivers of Samoa town's rebirth. All it took was to bring a piece of ground back to what it used to be, and start loving it again every day, or at least every day of the summer during softball season. For the next 30 years. It's in writing.

Oh, and this just in. Funding has been approved for the Samoa Cookhouse renovation, so there's one more historic landmark saved by the bell. And those concrete pads where that row of garages used to be? A perfect place to put a row "cabins" and rent them out to tourists. Didn't we used to call that kind of thing a "motor court?" That's coming too.

Someone needs to remember to go up there and inform the night watchman at the Cookhouse that he can stop rewinding the grandfather clock any day now.

*Daniel Duncan's novels and a screenplay (about a girls softball league in Arcata) may be found at [SmallWorldBookpress.com](http://SmallWorldBookpress.com).*



❖ THE FUTURE OF ARCATA  
Daniel Duncan