

## LET THE PUBLIC SPEAK

### Plan for evacuations

EDITOR: When the Glass Fire came over Rincon Ridge on the night of Sept. 27, 2020, we had to evacuate. I drove two blocks before joining a stationary line of vehicles on St. Francis Road. There we sat for over an hour. We couldn't move because Highway 12 was completely jammed with vehicles fleeing the fire.

After a while watching houses and forest on the ridge a quarter-mile away explode into flames, I thought I might have to leave my vehicle and run for it. But older folks who were also trapped could not run and were terrified as the enormous flames crept closer.

We survived because the wind was not strong and because of the bravery of the firefighters. Had the winds been as strong as in the 2017 fires, scores or possibly hundreds of people could have been incinerated, trapped in their cars.

Over the past 30 years, I've seen Highway 12 become increasingly clogged with vehicles as more and more housing was built. Any further housing development along Highway 12 east of Calistoga Road is insane.

This is the wildland-urban interface and a known fire corridor. Somebody tell the planning department.

### LEO JONES

Santa Rosa

### Government spending

EDITOR: Greg Seifter says Joe Biden shouldn't criticize the Republicans for being "fiscally demented" because he's spent multitrillions in his first two years in office ("Big-spending Biden," Letters, Feb. 2). Let me point out that Donald Trump increased the national debt by \$7.8 trillion in his four years as president.

If you go back to Ronald Reagan, the debt has increased more when Republicans control Congress than Democrats. If you remember what you learned in your U.S. government class in high school, there are three branches of government, the executive, the judicial and the legislative. The executive branch enforces the laws, the judicial interprets the laws and the legislative branch makes the laws, including spending bills.

they are working and have relationships with family and friends of means. They do need housing.

Many people squatting on trails and sidewalks have drug and mental problems, and a tiny house won't fix that. Some eke out only the most basic survival by preying on others. Many have drug and alcohol problems and families and sober friends have given up on them. I'm sorry for their situation.

The solution is to first address the cause — drugs and/or mental disorders. Sort out people who need sheltering in a mental care setting, and for the rest shut down the drug pipeline. That may help.

Meanwhile, create low-income housing for those who are currently sheltered and need it to live on their own. I guarantee if a home were provided, and if there were rules they have to adhere to, we will still have a homeless crisis.

### KAREN NORMAN-BOUDREAU

Sebastopol

### Menacing aircraft

EDITOR: Foreign aircraft loitering over U.S. airspace is a menace. Is it a stretch of the imagination to send a drone up to fly in formation with the object, photograph it, scope it out and even grapple and coax it down to an airfield? On the other hand, it is so gratifying to blast it to smithereens with a Sidewinder missile.

### ED McATEE

Sebastopol

### SMART to the airport

EDITOR: SMART desperately needs to use some of its windfall to connect the train directly to Charles M. Schulz-Sonoma County Airport. We residents love our airport and use it whenever we can, so now the parking is sometimes full. Plus, to make public transit actually usable to and from the airport there needs to be a train station at the airport. Think Seattle, Portland, etc. Please, please, please SMART board, make it happen.

### MARTI SWAB

Santa Rosa

Congress is responsible for government spending, not the president. Presidents can submit a budget and bills to increase spending on their priorities, but in the end, Congress has to approve the bills.

What did we get for the “multitrillions” Seifter says Biden spent? We finally got a bipartisan infrastructure bill, after being promised one by Trump for four years. We also spent money to clean up the COVID disaster he left for Biden. The Democrats have done more to make America great, as opposed to giving tax breaks for billionaires.

## TEMPLE O. SMITH

Cloverdale

### Addressing homelessness

EDITOR: Sometimes when I read about homelessness, I feel like I’m living in another reality. The working poor are living with family or friends, they rent rooms, sleep on couches or in RVs on someone’s property because

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