

Standard online reader survey



Q: Do you like the TDOT plan to reconfigure the intersections by Three Star Mall and make Sparta Street dead end?

YES 27 percent
NO 73 percent

GUEST EDITORIAL

Global warming not going to disappear

Even among those who agree human-caused global warming is happening, the footnote has been the understanding that no individual weather event or catastrophe is caused by the overall temperature rise.

Until this summer in the Northern Hemisphere.

It's not just hot here in California, where it's always hot in July, August and September. It's not just Death Valley, where German tourists always flock to feel the heat they (formerly) couldn't at home.

It was hovering around 90 degrees Fahrenheit at the Arctic Circle in Norway and Sweden last week. In July, the hottest temperature ever recorded in Scotland was hit — 92 degrees in a village near Glasgow. It was 106 in Japan, also that nation's highest ever.

And while it's often in the triple digits in the air here, the Pacific Ocean had never in 102 years of daily water-temperature readings seen the Pacific Ocean hit 78 degrees at the pier in La Jolla where the Scripps Institute is — until this summer.

Rising ocean temperatures are another feature of global warming, and will radically alter our formerly famous Mediterranean climate insofar as night-time air temperatures go. Unlike most of the rest of the coun-

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try, when California has a 95-degree summer day, it's never been unusual for the outdoors temp to cool to the mid-50s by late evening. Felt anything like the upper 50s lately?

Global warming is without a doubt a culprit in the suddenly year-round fire danger we face throughout our state. The higher temperatures mean dried-out trees, forest undergrowth and grasslands. Those plants burn more easily when a spark of any kind ignites them.

The *San Francisco Chronicle* cites a report in which researchers at Columbia University and the University of Idaho showed that human-caused warming had dried out our forests so much that fire seasons throughout the West have expanded by an average of nine days every year since 2000.

Now is the time to not give into despair but to lobby our leaders, and governments around the world, telling them to stop sticking their heads in the (hot) sand, believe the science and begin a technical approach to reversing the real problem humans have brought to our planet.



Singing praises for print

Friday morning began auspiciously enough with my usual daily routine: Up early, first cup or two of coffee, then out the door to feed my two Canine-Americans, Big Dog and Buddy. After a short and leisurely stroll around Pleasant Cove, it was back to the mailbox to fetch my favorite local newspaper, the *Southern Standard*.

As a columnist myself, for more fun than profit, I turned quickly to the Opinions page. James Clark's "The Scoop" title, "Technology to make *Standard* even better," caught my eye. After opining about "how much longer newspapers will be around in printed format ... As a max, I think we're talking a 10-year lifespan. It could be less, but I don't see more," he goes on to paint a positive picture of the virtues of technology over printed newspapers.

That pessimistic prognostication was like a dagger to my low-tech heart. After all, I've been an avid fan of newspapers ever since I carried them for *The Tennessean* when I was still in grammar school.

My love affair with newspapers continued to grow throughout my military career. I became especially fond of the *Southern Standard*, which I managed to read on five of the seven continents. From Bangkok to Berlin, Long An to Lima, Manila to Monterey, Saigon to Seoul, and so on, I was always

pleased to find the *Standard* wherever my mail found me. No matter how old it was by then, it was still news to me about the folks back home.

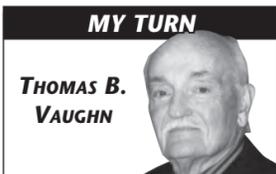
Speaking of the folks back home, I wonder how many of those of my generation would agree that technology will make the *Standard* an even better newspaper. More to the point, I wonder how many *Standard* readers, current and potential, have access to the internet. Perhaps a poll, properly worded, would reveal that information or something like it.

As for me, I have access to the internet, and I use it for many things, but not for reading newspapers, including the *Standard*. As I've often said, I could, but I choose not to. Instead, I prefer the tangibility of printed newspapers, real things I can actually touch, over the virtual reality of computers and such.

As for James Clark's gloomy forecast for printed newspapers and optimistic opinion on the brave new world of technology to come, I offer this gentle rejoinder in praise of printed newspapers.

I hope he is wrong on the future of the former, but I fear he may be right. Meanwhile, I will cling to my printed newspapers to the last page.

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THOMAS B. VAUGHN

Looking for 2020 vision

Every four years, political professionals assess the landscape and gird for the final push toward the midterm congressional elections. With Donald Trump in the White House and with small Republican margins of control in both chambers of Congress, and with Democrats lusty for revenge, these contests are especially critical.

Here are the factors that may influence the November contests and shape the political landscape into the next decade:

— The president. If the midterm is a referendum on Trump, then it will be one of those rare elections where national issues predominate and the performance of the chief executive matters. If it isn't, then it will be a series of local elections where compelling candidates (like Democratic Rep. Conor Lamb in southwestern Pennsylvania) can go against expectations and win contests in districts Trump carried decisively only 24 months earlier.

— The economy. Nobody's complaining about the financial markets, and though the current surge of economic growth began under Barack Obama, Trump isn't trampling on precedent to claim credit; Bill Clinton did so with an economic recovery that probably began under George H.W. Bush. And you can bet if we were in recession, the president's critics would blame him.

The economy presents an overall advantage to Republicans. There is a dark cloud, besides the persistent notion that booms don't last forever: Consumer prices have risen 2.9 percent over the last year, an emblem of growth but perhaps a forerunner of the curse recalled by older voters but unknown to

younger ones -- inflation.

— Is there a Blue Wave? Anyone who grew up on a coast knows that what might look like a big wave in the medium distance sometimes turns out to be a ripple, with little undertow. Democrats see a tsunami consuming all the Republican lawmakers in its path. Wearing rosy glasses and on the lookout for a Red Wave, Republicans say they see no blue swell, though some privately fear a rip tide -- one that rips apart the Trump coalition.

Here's an intriguing fact: The four biggest House losses since 1934 by the party holding the White House have come under Democratic presidents. Note this: Obama's approval ratings when he lost 63 seats are within the margin of error of the approval ratings Trump has now.

— Who are this fall's critical swing voters -- and will they be the same for the presidential election in 2020? There's a strong suggestion that the 2016 presidential election was shaped by rural and working white men, the latter group a onetime pillar of the FDR New Deal coalition but vulnerable to entreaties from tough-talking Republicans like Richard Nixon, Ronald Reagan and Trump. And yet there is every indication that both parties believe the power swing in these midterms are suburban voters, particularly women. (Warning: A lot of experts said the same thing about the 2016 presidential election and were wrong.)

Though nobody has 2020 vision, some hints should come this November.

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NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

DAVID M. SHRIBMAN



JUST A THOUGHT

LISA HOBBS



Normal drive to work takes terrifying turn

It was a normal day, a day much like any other day of the week.

Alarm clock ripped through the silence at 6 a.m., and I hit snooze. That nine-minute pause allowed time to coordinate my morning activities: I'm going to get up, get dressed, go for a walk, and collapse onto the floor out of complete and utter exhaustion. After a brief recovery, I'll pause for the breakfast of champions. Then, I'll get dressed -- contrary to the nightmare of showing up naked -- and go to work.

Nine-minute warning sounds. Let's do this.

Two hours and 30 minutes later, I'm driving to work. Radio on. Scanning for music. Can I request less talk and more music? Please and thank you! I've found being polite helps, even when the radio personality can't hear you.

Check my speed, set cruise control and keep an eye on the motorists around me. A glimpse into the center rearview mirror and ... seconds later I'm sitting on the side of the road and leaping from my car.

What is the most terrifying thing you can imagine seeing in your car's interior rearview mirror while driving? That was the question I asked of co-workers when I finally succeeded in making it to work that morning.

One said, "The blue lights of a state trooper."

"A meat cleaver coming at you from the backseat," said another.

Both those answers are justifiably terrifying in their own right. One is going to cost you time and money, while the other will undoubtedly mess up your hair and makeup.

Neither of those scenarios are what caused me to feverishly slam on my breaks, swerve to the side of the street and bolt like a screaming banshee leaving the door open.

As I stood there solemnly looking at my car, I'm calculating the distance to work and how long it would take me to just walk. Fear rushed over me with the realization that I had to do it. I had to gather my nerve and venture back to the vehicle.

Time to face my fear. Deep breathe in. Tentative step forward. Let it out. Anxiety gripping. Watchful eyes scanning the interior of the vehicle. Deeper breathe in, and let it out slower. Half steps drawing me closer and making my way around. I ease open up all the doors. Nothing. Peeking in and scanning the interior. Where is it? No movement, except for the passing vehicles.

I closed all the doors, eased back into the driver's seat and prepared for the heart attack I knew was coming as I pulled back into a lane.

No radio entertainment. The quiet, relaxation of my morning was shattered. Eyes darting around the front interior of the car. Still looking, but not seeing anything. The tension was unbearable. Hand on the rearview mirror and using it to scan the back seat and that's when I see it. ... The hornet that was in my car is now in my hair.

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