‘BARON OF BACON’ BOLDLY SETS UP SHOP WITH ENDLESS VARIETY OF BURGERS »

RESTAURANT JAUNTS CREATE CREDIBILITY ISSUE FOR POLITICIANS »

UNVEILING ECONOMIC TEAM, BIDEN PLEDGES, ‘HELP IS ON THE WAY’ »
Who would open a specialty burger joint in the middle of a pandemic? Scott Slater would. The founder and namesake of Slater's 50/50 already planned to open his restaurant in Fresno pre-pandemic, signing his lease last year. “Opening up a restaurant, the middle of pandemic sounds absolutely insane,” Slater said, on hand for the restaurant’s grand opening on Wednesday.

“With the recent regulations and moving to the purple tier, it doesn’t look like we’re going to be getting out of that anytime soon. So what better time right now, right before the holidays get Slater’s 50/50 open?” — Slater’s 50/50 founder Scott Slater

The restaurant’s slogan is “Bacon, Burger, Beer.” It offers 17 varieties of burgers, with the usual add-ons such as bacon, mushrooms and cheese. There is also a peanut-butter flavored burger. A build-your-own burger concept offers millions of possible combinations. “My recommendations any time you go to Slater’s 50/50, you must get the 50/50 patty. It’s 50 percent ground beef, 50 percent ground bacon. Our signature burger has pepper jack cheese, a fried egg, avocado mash and chipotle mayo. Slater first served his mix during tailgate parties during his days attending San Diego State University. Another burger, available at the Fresno store only is the Fresno Farmhouse Burger. Stacked three-patties high, it is too much for even the biggest mouth.

A definite fork-and-knife burger. The burger includes an angus beef patty, a 50/50 (meat/bacon) patty and a fried chicken patty. It has two types of cheese — pepper jack and American — along with Nashville (spicy) slaw, pickled red onions, sautéed mushroom’s and Tapatio ranch sauce. Burger prices range form $13.50 to $20. There are even non-meat options such as a Portobello mushroom burger and black bean veggie patty.

The Shakes
Another Slater’s specialty is the variety of shakes. While the base price is $12, they are big enough — and sweet enough — for four. The Happy Happy Birthday Shake should not be...
Community Medical Centers now has more employees off work due to COVID-19 exposure than at any other time during the pandemic. As of Wednesday morning, the Valley hospital system’s online dashboard shows 335 employees are not able to report to work due to COVID exposure. Of those, 108 are confirmed to have tested positive for the virus.

CMC had been updating their dashboard twice a week. But on Wednesday, a message posted out on their social media accounts says that is now changing. “Due to the rising number of COVID cases in our community, this dashboard will be updated three times per week (Monday, Wednesday, Friday) by 10 a.m.,” CMC wrote on their Twitter account. Fresno County remains in the state’s ‘purple’ COVID tier – but local case rates are trending better than last week. State data shows the county recording 13.5 COVID-19 cases per 100,000 residents, which translates to a 6.4% positivity rate.

However, Fresno County hospitals report only 9 ICU beds available – a drop from 12 just the day before. Meanwhile, patients arriving at local hospitals by ambulance are having to wait longer before they can be admitted. American Ambulance President Todd...
RESTAURANT JAUNTS CREATE CREDIBILITY ISSUE FOR POLITICIANS

December 2, 2020 | David Taub

SAN FRANCISCO — Their messaging has been clear: wear a mask, stay 6 feet apart from others, and most importantly: stay home! But their actions aren’t living up to the rhetoric, creating a real political problem for some of the most vocal leaders in California’s fight to contain the coronavirus. First came Gov. Gavin Newsom, who won plaudits for issuing the first statewide stay-at-home order in the U.S. back in March.

He broke the state rules when he and his wife were caught dining with 10 others at the posh French Laundry restaurant in Napa in early November with lobbyists and others from numerous different households, sitting close together, mask-less. San Francisco’s mayor, London Breed, was at the same $350-a-plate restaurant a day later, dining with a San Francisco socialite and six others. Breed has also won accolades for imposing some of the strictest rules in California, keeping coronavirus rates relatively low. Her spokesperson hasn’t responded to queries about how many households were there — state rules cap those at three.

The revelations come at a critical time as the nation deals with a dramatic spike in case rates, hospitalizations and deaths. It’s more important than ever that we follow the rules, the public is told. But when the same leaders aren’t following the guidelines themselves, their credibility is shattered and it makes it harder to trust that their guidance is solid.

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SAN DIEGO — A young bobcat that was badly burned in a Southern California wildfire will be released back into the wild, the San Diego Humane Society announced Tuesday. The 7- to 9-month-old female was picked up on Tuesday from the group’s Ramona Wildlife Center.

A state Department of Fish and Wildlife worker took her to an area outside the site of the fire that biologists say has “rich food and water sources,” according to a humane society statement. The blaze erupted in September near the small city of Yucaipa in San Bernardino County. It was sparked by a pyrotechnic device a couple used for a gender reveal party. The fire destroyed several homes and killed a firefighter in San Bernardino National Forest.

The bobcat was discovered on Oct. 13 by a woman walking her dogs. The emaciated cat was treated for burns, some of which were infected, and did so well that she doubled in size to more than 9 pounds (4.1 kilograms) in a month and made a full recovery in...
WILMINGTON, Del. — President-elect Joe Biden on Tuesday introduced top advisers he says will help his administration rebuild an economy hammered by the coronavirus pandemic, declaring, “I know times are tough, but I want you to know that help is on the way.”

Biden said he’d chosen a “first-rate team” that is “tested and experienced” to tackle the country’s economic crisis. He picked liberal advisers who have long prioritized the nation’s workers and government efforts to address economic inequality. Unemployment remains high as the COVID-19 outbreak widens the gulf between average people and the wealthiest Americans. The virus, which has claimed more than 269,000 lives nationwide, is resurgent across the country amid holiday travel and colder weather sending people indoors.

As he did frequently while campaigning, Biden promised that the U.S. would eventually emerge with an economy that is dramatically reshaped to better stamp out economic inequality. “From the most unequal economic and job crisis in modern history, we can build a new American economy that works for all Americans, not just some,” Biden said as he introduced his choices for some of the government’s top economic posts during a speech at a theater in Wilmington, Delaware, where he has led his transition to the presidency. Tuesday also marked the president-elect’s first appearance since breaking two small bones in his right foot while playing with one of his dogs over the weekend. He wore a black walking boot and moved gingerly but tried to keep things light. As he emerged from his motorcade, Biden pointed to his boot and lifted his leg briefly to show it off. Asked about his foot by reporters, Biden responded only, “Good, thanks for asking.” The injury, while not serious, again intensifies scrutiny on Biden’s age, given that he just turned 78 and is the oldest president ever to be in his first term. Still, his team has tried to keep the focus on building out its government and upcoming policy challenges, chief among them the pandemic and the economy.

**Most of His Choices Will Require Confirmation From the Deeply Divided Senate**

Biden repeatedly evoked his work as vice president when the Obama administration oversaw the economic recovery following the 2008 financial crisis, noting that many of those on his newly formed economic team worked closely with him then. 

December 1, 2020 | AP News

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US TIGHTENS DEFINITION OF SERVICE ANIMALS ALLOWED ON PLANES

December 2, 2020 | AP News

The days of pets flying with their owners in airplane cabins are coming to an end. The Transportation Department issued a final rule Wednesday covering animals on airlines. It decided that only dogs can fly as service animals, and companions that passengers use for emotional support don't count.

The rule aims to settle years of tension between airlines and passengers who bring their pets on board for free by saying they need them for emotional help. Under a longstanding department policy, all the passengers needed was a note from a health professional.

Airlines argued that passengers abused the situation to bring a menagerie of animals on board including cats, turtles, pot-bellied pigs and, in one case, a peacock. The agency said Wednesday that it was rewriting the rules partly because passengers carrying unusual animals on board "eroded the public trust...
An aid organization that helps children and families all over the world got its start after a chance meeting between an Iranian girl and a California woman. Delfarib Fanaie and her husband had traveled in 2006 to an Iranian orphanage to adopt their third daughter when Fanaie was approached by another girl, Sepideh, who asked plaintively, “Why can’t you take me with you?” That question haunted Fanaie after she returned to the U.S. and led her to co-found Moms Against Poverty, a San Francisco-based nonprofit that provides food, housing, health care and education opportunities for disadvantaged children and their families in the U.S. and overseas. Since its founding 12 years ago, MAP has had an impact on 1 million people in 14 countries. Today its primary focus is on programs in the U.S., Iran, Cambodia, and Senegal, Fanaie told GV Wire.

The group’s fundraising events this year were hamstrung by the coronavirus epidemic, as has been the case for nonprofits nationwide, Fanaie said. “At the same time, it has awakened a lot of people to understanding that in this world we are all one human family and the world right now is in crisis,” she said. “Hunger is the new pandemic in our country and around the globe. “So a lot of people are actually extending themselves to give more money as well. I mean, we’ve seen both sides. Some of our donors haven’t been able to give as much as they gave every year. ... But at the same time, we see the small donations are increasing because of the fact that people know that they have to share right now because humanity is suffering. We have all been able to see that if we come together, we can make a difference.”

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One of the goals of MAP is to break the cycle of poverty by giving children opportunities, such as building schools in their communities, that will enable them to be self-sufficient and help lift their communities. But nutrition is also a focus because it’s important for brain development and for learning.

COVID-19 Impacts Fundraising
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In Senegal
MAP works with partners globally as well as locally, listening to learn about community needs and then finding ways to meet those needs. The nonprofit’s work in Senegal, for example encompasses all its programs: education, health care, orphan care, and basic provisions including food. Since 2016, MAP has built six schools, including four elementary schools, providing education as well as food to the students. MAP also has partnered with a local organization to run an orphanage for children newborn to age...
PHNOM PENH, Cambodia — The pachyderm dubbed the “world’s loneliest elephant” after languishing alone for years in a Pakistani zoo was greeted on his arrival in Cambodia on Monday by chanting Buddhist monks and was then sent on his way to a wildlife sanctuary.

Like other travelers during these times, Kaavan needed to be tested for COVID-19 before his flight. Once his large metal crate was safely on board, Kaavan was provided with in-flight snacks — 200 kilograms of them — for the seven-hour journey. Kaavan was not stressed during the flight, eating his food and even getting a little bit of sleep standing in his crate, said Amir Khalil, a veterinarian who accompanied him on the flight and works with Four Paws, the Vienna-headquartered animal rescue group that organized the move.

“He behaves like a frequent flier. The flight was uneventful, which is all you can ask for when you transfer an elephant,” Khalil said. The 36-year-old, 9,000-pound Kaavan is said to have become lonely in Pakistan after his mother, his only socializing companion, died some five years ago and no other elephants were introduced into his zoo.

ISRAELI LAWMAKERS TAKE A STEP TOWARD NEW NATIONAL ELECTIONS

December 2, 2020 | AP News

Israel took a major step toward plunging into its fourth national election in under two years on Wednesday as lawmakers — supported by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s main coalition partner — passed a preliminary proposal to dissolve parliament.

The 61-54 vote came just seven months after the coalition took office in a declaration of national unity to confront the coronavirus crisis. But since then, the alliance between Netanyahu’s Likud Party and Defense Minister Benny Gantz’s Blue and White has been locked in infighting. The vote gave only preliminary approval to ending the alliance and forcing a new election early next year. The legislation...

IRAN SAYS ISRAEL KILLED MILITARY NUCLEAR SCIENTIST REMOTELY

November 30, 2020 | AP News

TEHRAN, Iran — A top Iranian security official on Monday accused Israel of using “electronic devices” to remotely kill a scientist who founded the Islamic Republic’s military nuclear program in the 2000s. Ali Shamkhani, the secretary of the country’s Supreme National Security Council, made the comment at the funeral for Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, where Iran’s defense minister separately vowed to continue the man’s work “with more speed and more power.”

Iran, long suspected of killing Iranian nuclear scientists over the last decade, has repeatedly declined to comment on the attack. Fakhrizadeh headed Iran’s so-called AMAD program, which Israel and the West have alleged was a military operation looking at the...