



EVEN THE BEST-LAID PLANS ...

BY TY SAFRENO

A H THE JOYS OF FOUR-PLUS HOURS OF GEOMETRY HOME work a day! My graduated 8th grader, now a freshman in high school, had started to settle into a routine of tinkering on the 1929 Ford AA truck he is rebuilding for his daily driver. He is not yet of driving age, but yes, he has his first vehicle. To be fair, it's not functional; hence the rebuilding part. So it's a project, not really an automobile at this point. It also has a top speed of 50 mph, which was a big part of why his parents said "yes" to this project. This summer, he had big plans for it when "Wham!" Trudie and I let him know he has "agreed" to take an intensive 5-week geometry course starting in early June. This "agreement" was news to him of course, and all those big plans for the summer evaporated in one short discussion.



That can also be said about our own progress as we head into the post-COVID-19 world. All previously conceived business plans have changed or evaporated, and most of the business community is putting summer on hold to figure out how to remain relevant in the fall, winter, and beyond. One of the big discussions in the business community, and in the local governments, is how to rebuild our economy and return to an environment of low unemployment. In reality, we need to create an environment which moves the job mix from predominately low-paying to predominately good-paying jobs and career paths. This, along with an expansion of key technology-centric career opportunities can start to make a real difference for families on the Central Coast.

Shortly after the *Central Coast Journal* is released this month, REACH (Regional Economic Action Coalition, formerly Hourglass) will be presenting its REACH 2030 Jobs Plan. Many private leaders have been working behind the scenes to build this plan which covers our real economic region, San Luis Obispo and North Santa Barbara Counties, and find the hidden opportunities there. Little did we know how important this work would turn out to be due to the economic fallout from the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Ok yes, I'm a little biased on this. I have personally been involved in REACH, and believe in its motto of "Ideas + Action for a Thriving Central Coast." The group of business leaders involved are highly focused on "Ideas + Action." Now, more than ever, we need action, and a meaningful path to a better future.

In this time of so much uncertainty, there is much to be optimistic about. None of it will come easily. Good things are not easy; they require hard work, dedication, and putting "we" before "me" in everything we do. This is our region's "We Choose to go to the Moon" moment, not because it is easy, but because it will change our trajectory and create a more promising future for our kids and grandkids.

Talk to you again in another four weeks! Be safe, and be kind to one another. ■

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