There’s a Zoom bomb with his name on it
Santa Rosa reporter investigated neo-Nazis, became target

By Raheem Hosseini

Phil Barber was at the standing desk in his home office when he received a phone call about the Zoom bomb. Barber, a reporter with the Santa Rosa Press Democrat, had just published a 2,100-word article about government meetings falling prey to antisemitic “Zoom tacks” by unidentified individuals using online conferencing platforms to bombard the meetings with hate speech.

Barber had covered the phenomenon before, but this was his deep-dive analysis: tying various threads together: unsuspecting public officials, opportunistic hate-sowers and an opening of how to stop the troubling without abandoning the pandemic-populated technology that brought more people into government processes.

ABOVE: Gabe Stutman, an editor at Jewish News of Northern California, has also been targeted by antisemitic Zoom bomb callers, describing their efforts as “despicable and pathetic.”

TOP: Phil Barber, a reporter with the Santa Rosa Press Democrat, wrote about how a tight-knit group was infiltrating city meetings held over Zoom with antisemitic hate speech.

Official: ‘Tech to assess AI safety ‘barely exists’

By Choe DiFulciottino

As an engineer with a PhD in applied physics who once ran the U.S. government’s largest defense research lab, the former White House artificial intelligence is nearly impossible.

Inputs and outputs, Prabhu said.

The individual who phoned Barber informed him that, at the previous night’s Nevada City Council meeting, he became part of the story: Barber found a link to a recording of the Sept. 26, 2023, meeting, a hybrid affair held in person and on Zoom. About 15 hours in, a caller introduced himself as “Phil Barber … a journalist that covers extremism.” The meeting continued on A8.

Snowpack lagging as big storm hits state

Levels at only 52% of average in latest survey of high country

By Kurtis Alexander

California has received barely half of the snow it typically gets by this point in winter, confirming widespread concern of a “snow drought” as the wet winter season moves into its second half and rain and snow growth starts to produce cold, powder-producing storms.

State water officials reported 30% of average snowpack across California’s high country in the second snow survey of the year on Tuesday, a day before a major storm was forecast to bring down on the state and at least slightly improve prospects for the season, particularly in the southern Sierra Nevada. Another big storm is expected to arrive Sunday.

Snow in the Sierra, southern Cascades and Trinity Mountains is vital for California, providing nearly a third of the state’s water. Below-average snowpack bodies badly out for municipal and agricultural water supplies but for forest health and wildlife danger.

“There’s always a chance of catching,” said Jay Lund, chief director at the Center for Western Water and Climate at UC Davis and a professor of civil and environmental engineering, but it may not be very likely, even though it could be a very wet year.”

Federal forecasting models indicate that at least the next two weeks will be wet, and snowy, with a major Snowstorm continues on A7

Sensors in the sky help scientists improve forecasts

By Jack Lee

This past weekend, scientists launched giant balloons from Sonoma County to collect data on the weather.

This was not the only test event.

The launches are part of the Atmospheric River Reconnaissance program, an effort led by the Center for Western Water and Climate at UC Davis’s Scripps Institution of Oceanography. Weather balloons measure the atmospheres of the tracks of these atmospheric river-fueled storms, including one expected to roll this week in the Bay Area, and improve forecasts.

In Haight, new housing — but not more parking

Snow on the roof, spread, sensors take measurements that provide a profile of conditions high above the Earth’s surface.

“Snow on the roof has spread, sensors take measurements that provide a profile of conditions high above the Earth’s surface.”

Merchants say that residents use mass transit is “wishful thinking”

By J.K. Dineen

For the past six months, Amoeba Music co-owner Joe Goldmark has watched as an apartment building at 730 Stanyan rises next to his San Francisco store. The cornerstone of the third story is a parking space, but if the building is completed soon it will be nothing over the old “bowling” marquee left