

The Bakersfield Californian

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PHOTO COURTESY OF HOLLOWAY

Holloway President Vard Terry, right, stands with his son Daniel, a third-generation Holloway employee, at the company's gypsum mine in Lost Hills.

Farm supplier bears witness to 50 years in local agriculture

BY JOHN COX
jcox@bakersfield.com

Vard Terry took a drive from Bakersfield to Paso Robles not long ago to visit a retired farm manager and former customer who had reached out after hearing him talk on the radio about the ag business.

For at least two hours they chatted over coffee on the porch, looking out over rolling hills of well-tended vineyards and reminiscing about earlier days in California agriculture.

They laughed about mistakes made during the region's sometimes bumpy transition from mostly cotton, alfalfa and other row crops to mostly orchards and vineyards.

"We just reminisced. It was so good," he said.

For Terry, president of Bakersfield-based ag, mining and logistics company Holloway, the visit served as a reminder of how much things have changed in local ag since he joined the company 50 years ago Saturday.

Having worked closely with farmers large and small, he has a broad perspective on what the industry has gone through during the past half-century. On the occasion of his work anniversary, he shared some of his observations during a conversation with The Californian.

Born in Wasco, Terry basically grew up at Holloway. His father, Vard Terry Sr., was the company's mining superintendent, and the younger Terry loved to watch the heavy machinery run at the company's gypsum mine in Lost Hills. Later as a salesman for the company, he roamed much of the Central Valley building trust and lifelong relationships with his customers.

Looking back, he says the region's water situation has changed drastically. That has brought with it advancements and investments in irrigation technology for more precise, efficient application.

Changes he has experienced go well beyond that. They range from a sharp tightening of the labor market to greater automation to smarter applications of science through things like soil, tissue and water sampling.

"Twenty years ago, there was more of a repeating what we've done as op-



PHOTO COURTESY OF HOLLOWAY

Vard Terry, now a 50-year employee and president of Holloway, stands as a young man next to a company car by the company's gypsum mine in Lost Hills.



PHOTO COURTESY OF HOLLOWAY

In this photo from the mid-1950s, Vard Terry Sr. stands in the center with Harvey Holloway, left, and Al Holloway.

posed to today (saying.) "Let's look at this scientifically," he said.

One of the most consequential shifts was the move away from row crops

such as cotton, wheat and sugar beets to higher-margin, so-called permanent

opinion." After graduating law school, Kang adjudicated legal matters for five years in

Please see **TERRY | A2**

Did state get its money's worth from \$1.7 billion COVID test contract?

Delayed tests or improper methods cloud record of lab hired under a \$1.7 billion no-bid contract

BY KRISTEN HWANG AND ANA B. IBARRA
CalMatters

A patient sample that wasn't processed for more than 30 days. A test used without proper validation of its accuracy. Patient results changed without notification. Safety and disinfection procedures called into question.

These are just a few of the myriad problems at the Valencia Branch Laboratory, a public-private COVID-19 testing lab operated by Perkin-Elmer that the California Department of Public Health hired in a

no-bid, \$1.7 billion annual contract.

An inspection report released last month by the health department outlines major problems dating back further than a year ago, raising new questions about how the state is spending taxpayer dollars to combat the pandemic. The report shows the lab has routinely underperformed, failing to meet the contract's goals for turnaround times and numbers of processed tests. But the state auto-renewed the year-long contract at the end of October.

Gov. Gavin Newsom and state health officials say the laboratory has been crucial to expanding the state's testing capacity for schools and underserved communities.

But California's two largest school districts — Los Angeles Unified and San Diego Unified — aren't relying on the lab because it was unavailable when they needed it.

A CalMatters analysis shows each test at the PerkinElmer Valencia lab costs the state more than three times the amount the Los Angeles Unified pays a Bay Area startup.

Please see **TESTS | A3**

PANDEMIC

Expert reports omicron variant is 'just raging around the world'

NATION | A4

CONGRESS

Sen. Manchin says he won't support Biden's \$2 trillion social, environmental bill

NATION | A4

FOOTBALL

49ers roll past Falcons 31-13 for 5th win in 6 games

SPORTS | B1



Public defender embodies public service, compassion

BY ISHANI DESAI
idesai@bakersfield.com

Peter Kane, 50, references the files

an ethnic studies major at the University of California, Berkeley, he said in a recent interview with The Californian. While

opinion." After graduating law school, Kang adjudicated legal matters for five years in

VIEWPOINTS

My '5 Days Before Christmas' wish list

In the spirit of the holidays, I submit my "5 Days Before Christmas" wish list. This is my feeble attempt at revising the traditional "12 Days of Christmas," a famous holiday song about receiving gifts from your "true love."

My wishes are in random order without regard for political consideration, with my limited knowledge of Christmas folklore and designed to respect holiday traditions.

With significant effort, my wishes can be sung to the classic Chipmunks' song "Christmas, Christmas Don't Be Late."

Wish 1. It snows everywhere on earth on Christmas morning.

The last time we had any measurable amount of snowfall in Bakersfield was on Jan. 25, 1999. Imagine what a special present for children everywhere on earth to wake up to freshly fallen snow Christmas morning.

Wish 2. Peace on earth happens on Christmas Day and lasts forever.

A quote from music legend Jimi Hendrix explains my wishes best: "When the power of love overcomes the love of power, the world will know peace." Here are a few of my favorite lyric lines from songs that help explain how to achieve this wish: "All You Need Is Love," "Give Peace a Chance" and "Joy to the World."

Wish 3. On Christmas Day you receive more presence than presents.

One theory I subscribe to is human interaction is more of an expression of love than material items. The more time spent on social media distracts us from personal human contact. The buying of presents can make this time of year more stressful than magical. I will buy my children and grandchildren gifts this year, but my focus on presence supersedes any presents they receive.

Wish 4. Everyone cries, like I do, when they hear Bing Crosby sing "White Christmas."

This song reminds me of some of the things my seven brothers and sisters did not have growing up in southeast Bakersfield. We didn't have a white Christmas, never heard sleigh bells in the snow and the only tree tops I saw glisten were when my brother Willie and I were in the orchards on the top of a ladder picking peaches. Nor did we have our mother, who passed from cancer.

But on Christmas Day,

along with grandmother, dad, my brothers and sisters ... we had each other. Although I didn't realize it at the time, "each other" was the gift that helped us navigate a Christmas without our mom. Bing singing "White Christmas" takes me back to sitting on my living room floor with my siblings around our Christmas tree fearing Santa had forgotten us. Over the years, "White Christmas" helped me realize the most important presents were never under the tree.

Wish 5. Carolers show up at every doorstep on Christmas Eve singing "Ingle Bells."

My nephew Alfred and his wife Genine Flores are the Christmas caroler organizers in our family. You received a text asking if you are a text.

Soon after, and with a knock on the door, my nephews, nieces, and their children would begin singing Christmas songs on your front porch. I felt like we were transported back to a simpler time when television, cell phones and social media didn't yet exist. You could almost see snow falling around them as they sang.

My family carolers brought joy, smiles and happiness to everyone they visited. Because of the songs they sang, the sometimes-elusive magical time of the year became clearer, and the holiday spirit crystallized. The alchemy of Christmas songs sung by family to family helps bring us closer to those we miss.

Here are a few more items to consider for next year's Christmas wishes. All emails are lost, and everyone mails Christmas cards. All cell phones die when visitors walk into your home on Christmas Day. Before any presents are opened everyone watches the 1983 "A Christmas Story" movie. You've never seen the movie? It traditionally airs on TV for 24 straight hours starting at 9 p.m. on Christmas Eve. And lastly, the Las Vegas Raiders move back to Oakland and win the 2023 Superbowl.

And remember, if we are together and we hear "White Christmas," please hold me and have tissue ready.

From my family to yours, may all your wishes come true.

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STEVE FLORES FOR THE CALIFORNIAN

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TODAY IN HISTORY

1871: More than 4,300 people were killed when the Dona Paz, a Philippine passenger ship, collided with the tanker Vector off Mindoro island.

1803: The Louisiana Purchase was completed as ownership of the territory was formally transferred from France to the United States.

1860: South Carolina became the first state to secede from the Union as all 169 delegates to a special convention in Charleston voted in favor of separation.

1864: Confederate forces evacuated Savannah, Georgia, as Union Maj. Gen. William T. Sherman nearby completed his "March to the Sea."

1924: Adolf Hitler was released from prison after serving nine months for his role in the Beer Hall Putsch.

1946: The Frank Capra film "It's A Wonderful Life," starring James Stewart and Donna Reed, had a preview showing for charity in New York, a day before its official world premiere.

TERRY

Continued from PAGE A1

crops like almonds, citrus, pistachios and table grapes. Some farmers Terry knew swore they'd never make the switch. It was a huge risk back then that required substantial investment in new equipment and field redevelopment. Plus, growers had to be able to do without revenue for at least five years—or about seven for pistachios.

A lot of small family farms eventually sold out, surprised at how valuable their land had become. Meanwhile, consolidation increased such that much but not all of the region's farmland is owned by corporations.

Local grower and farm manager Mike Giannini reckons he ate breakfast with Terry and four others almost every day for 25 years. Together they had to switch to new practices as rising costs all but forced farmers to begin planting orchards and vineyards.

Over the years, his family farmed alfalfa, broccoli, cabbages, carrots, cotton, radishes, sugar beets, watermelons and wheat. But these days the family's holdings are about evenly divided between almond and pistachio orchards.

Giannini said he has watched the labor pool shrink to point it's "harder

and harder to keep people for pruning and harvesting."

Water is the biggest concern, he said, blaming shortages on a "manmade drought." The term refers to criticisms that freshwater used in support of state environmental priorities has cut irrigation deliveries to Central Valley growers.

Employment-related paperwork has become more cumbersome, Giannini added. Mom-and-pop farm operations have sold out or retired with no family member picking up in their place. Big-company holdings only grow, he said.

"Our farmers have farmed for generations here and it's hard to lose that," he said. "It's been a great career, you know?"

Gary Castro has worked with Terry for many years as a gypsum hauler based in Visalia. He said he's seen paperwork requirements mount in that time. New air quality rules mean next year he will have to replace 20 spreader trucks.

"Everything is changing," he said. "I mean, they're putting more and more regulations on farming."

Terry agreed about family farms becoming scarcer and about harvest labor being "a lot harder" to find these days.

But there have also been positive changes, like a greater use of pest control advisers and agronomists

such that farming decisions are made based on data and study. He added that chemicals and herbicides improve safety and efficiency.

Terry pointed as well to testing of all kinds and the advent of aerial drones that pinpoint farmland's previously unseen hot and cold spots. He noted, too, that automation has improved a great deal in his time, and that lately there's more focus on improving dust control during the almond harvest.

Terry's son Daniel has followed his father into the business, as he and his brother did. Holloway CEO Brian Maxted said in a statement that President Terry sets an example for the company's values, handed down from genera-

LOTTERY NUMBERS

Saturday's Powerball
2 6 24 51 61 1
Next jackpot: \$363 million

Friday's Mega Millions
21 32 38 48 62 10
Next jackpot: \$171 million

Saturday's SuperLotto
26 33 35 37 42 18
Next jackpot: \$8 million

Daily 3 MIDDAY: 7 1 2 EVENING: 4 4 3

Daily 4: 9 4 6 2

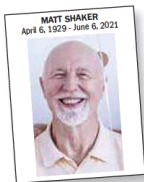
Fantasy 5: 7 13 25 28 34

Daily Derby HORSES: 6 8 11
RACE TIME: 1:41.39

IN MEMORIAM

The Bakersfield Californian remembers those who passed in 2021

Saturday, Dec. 25, 2021



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