



CRAZIFORNIA: Tales from the Tarnished State

Media Kit

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Media Contact



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Areas of expertise:

- California politics, elections and ballot measures
- California's influence elsewhere
- Business environment
- Education policy
- Energy policy
- Environmentalism vs. growth
- High speed rail and other boondoggles
- Public employee pensions
- Regulations and regulatory agencies
- Special interests
- Water policy

Author Biography



About Laer Pearce



Laer Pearce is a California public affairs expert with more than 30 years of experience navigating California's legislative and regulatory processes.

He's seen first hand how California has become progressively more "crazy" - more anti-business, more spendthrift, less rational and less competent. He's seen the negative effects of elected officials, powerful regulatory agencies and even more powerful special interests promoting their agendas without enough consideration for the state's future.

Experiencing this dysfunction up close prompted Pearce to write *Crazifornia: Tales from the Tarnished State*. Equal parts tragedy and comedy, *Crazifornia* details how this once great state was destroyed by good and bad intentions, incompetence and a lack of understanding of how the real world works.

Pearce gained his insights at his public affairs firm, Laer Pearce & Associates, which he opened in 1982. The firm helps home builders and land developers, water agencies, local municipalities, airports, healthcare plans and other regulated businesses find success in the face of regulatory over-reach and bureaucratic ineptitude. Every time he feels he has a thorough grasp on what California can do to a project or policy issue, another "Crazifornia moment" crops up, requiring the play book to be updated.

Pearce is a California native, born in a naval hospital in Oakland that was torn down to make room for a housing development that has since gone bankrupt. Eager to enter the world, Pearce was almost born on the Oakland Bay Bridge, which has since had to be rebuilt, but not without its own scandal and ineptness.

He lives in Orange County with his wife (an Orange County native) and two of their three daughters. His oldest daughter, unable to afford the cost of housing in California, has relocated to Arizona, and on days when California is being particularly crazy, he can't help but think about joining her. Then he remembers he is unemployable in any state that functions well enough to be worth moving to, and the realization keeps him in California. Along with the fantastic weather.

About Crazifornia



Crazifornia can be found on www.amazon.com and all popular eBook outlets.

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Synopsis

Through tale after outrageous, funny, tragic tale, *Crazifornia, Tales from the Tarnished State* explains why California is crashing, making it a must-read for all Californians and anyone who fears California may be coming their way soon.

Part One provides history and perspective, explaining how the PEER Axis – *Progressives, Environmentalists, Educators and Reporters* – took over the Golden State and work to keep it a leader in the application and exporting of Progressivism, generation after generation.

Part Two looks at the current state of affairs in the Tarnished State – bureaucratic ineptitude, anti-business policies, a failed education system, entrenched environmentalism, unsustainable pensions and a perpetually unbalanced budget - and considers California's options for the future. Will it become the Rust Coast or regain its Golden State status?

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PART TWO

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Chapter Seven: Education - All Children Left Behind

Chapter Eight: Environmentalism - Being - and Burning - Green

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Conclusion: A Century of Progressive Politics Comes Home to Roost

Crazifornia Excerpts



The Tarnished State

The tarnish runs deep on this state that just a generation ago remained justified in calling itself "golden." There are more welfare recipients in California than in the next eight states combined, three times more than the state should have, given its population. Gasoline costs, on average, 30 cents more per gallon in California than in other states, thanks to the bane of tougher-than-average environmental regulations and higher-than-average taxes. ... The state's debt, at a stunning \$361 billion as *Crazifornia* goes to print, is almost 20 percent greater than the debt of New York, the second most indebted state. It's no surprise, then, that California has the worst credit rating of any state, according to most credit-rating agencies. And in the current recession, Californians' income has fallen nearly twice as much as the national average and more people lost jobs, more homes were foreclosed upon, and more big banks went belly-up in California than in any other state.

California's Interesting Political History

The thought of [Republican governor Hiram] Johnson as a reformer was probably met with considerable cynicism by Californians who remembered his father, Grove Lawrence Johnson, a one-term U.S. congressman who left office after being charged with one of the most creatively wicked political schemes of all time. Facing certain defeat at the polls, the elder Johnson somehow saw to it that invisible ink was used on the already-printed ballots to print his name over his opponent's and vice versa. The invisible ink lasted just long enough for the ballots to be marked, then disappeared, so all the ballots marked for his opponent appeared to have been marked for him. But the son proved to be a dyed-in-the-wool Progressive firebrand.

California's Response to the Recession

As the recession clings to California, about the only shovel-ready job in the state is the ongoing installation of barriers to business, to the point where the only thing that's keeping a lot of businesses from fleeing is the recession itself. "It costs a lot of money to move and many companies just don't have it now," [corporate relocation expert Joe] Vranich told me. "Once the recession lifts, I see the exodus from California really picking up steam."

A new motivation for companies to leave lies about as well hidden as a body in a very shallow grave in Gov. Brown's 2012-13 budget. It is the governor's latest reaction to California's business exodus: the Business and Consumer Services Agency. Brown hyped it as an effort to downsize government through consolidation, but it's really something much more sinister: a consolidation of anti-business attitudes into a new mega-agency. One look at its structure and it's evident the Business and Consumer Services Agency will "service" business in the way male farm animals "service" female ones.

The Current State Budget

All of California's major newspapers dutifully reported Brown's proposed cuts and quoted numerous sources about the pain they would cause if actually enacted. But nowhere did they point out that California has a lot of room to cut, since it spends so much more on social ...

Crazifornia Excerpts



The Current State Budget (continued)

... programs than other states. Nor did they consider the possibility that, if the programs were cut, unproductive people who choose to live in California because of its abundant and generous welfare programs might actually take their neediness elsewhere. Wouldn't it be better to lose unproductive welfare recipients than job-creating businesses?

Environmental Groups Pushing for More Control

California's cap-and-trade program, which imposes iron-fisted emission restrictions on 85 percent of California's economy, should go into effect in 2013, missing its target start-up by a year due to a lawsuit challenging the proposed rules. No, it wasn't truckers, manufacturers or electrical utilities that filed the litigation; it was a gaggle of environmental justice groups that sued because the initial rules weren't devastating enough to satisfy them. Among the arguments these groups made was that the regulations mandated the minimum amount of reductions required to roll back California's greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels, not the maximum. Of course, the maximum reductions can only be met by shuttering factories and putting trucks up on blocks.

Hollywood's "War Against Morality"

That Hollywood became the center of this long-running [moral] controversy is ironic given the town's genesis. Two early wealthy Southern Californians, Harvey and Daieda Wilcox, created Hollywood in the 1880s on their 160-acre ranch, declaring the town would be "a peaceful and sacred oasis" where they and other devout Methodists could "practice abstinence and other virtues" in what they viewed as the moral capital of Southern California. When the film industry descended on Hollywood in the early 1900s, the conflicts that occurred as party-throwing movie stars moved in next door to fervently religious neighbors mimicked the nation's conflict, as the forces of morality fought the forces of film's "illicit lovemaking and iniquity," in the words of a study commissioned by President Teddy Roosevelt.

Taking the "Crazy" out of Crazifornia

The public employee pension crisis is but one of the issues that has driven California to the edge of craziness and beyond. Even if the people rise up and force change in pensions, will social program budgets be cut to levels aligned with the social welfare programs of other states? Will new laws more responsive to business replace existing laws that drag down profits? Will the school system be purged of ridiculous mandates from Sacramento and demands from teachers unions, so it can return to excellence? Or even improve to mere mediocrity? Will the state's swooning fascination with environmentalism mellow to a more pragmatic relationship with Mother Earth?

All these 180-degree changes are needed to take the "crazy" out of Crazifornia and turn California back into the Golden State. All still seem a long way off, but at least in the June 2012 primary we got a look at who it is that can drive these changes: individual citizens.

Endorsements



Anyone who is concerned about California's future or who fears that California's maladies will spread to their state should read *Crazifornia*. Laer Pearce, who I've known as a public affairs pro for as long as I've lived in California, has written the most insightful and entertaining book I've ever read on the genesis, depth and – surprisingly – deep funniness of California's perilous condition. Thankfully, this isn't a boring tome touting the next ultimately futile formula for supposedly fixing all that ails California. Rather, it's a story book, full of one astonishing tale after another about what really goes on in California, and why, and what it means to you. In the end, you'll learn a great deal and enjoy it a great deal.— Hugh Hewitt, Nationally syndicated radio host

'Crazifornia' made me laugh, it made me cry. No, really — one rarely reads such a funny account of such a sad subject. California, my beloved home, has gone from the destination spot in the nation to a pathetic basket case run into the ground by lunatics. Pearce pins the blame where it belongs. You won't find any solutions in this book, but solutions are pointless because the crazies who still run the state, and the crazies who vote those people, would never accept any solutions. This is a great book to read, tearfully, as you pack the house in Orange County and wait for the moving van to take you to Nevada. —Steve Greenhunt, columnist and author

If California history is one of your passions, then *Crazifornia* will provide the road map of where this state is and where it is going. With so much potential, California is being driven into a ditch. It's crazy. With an adroit morning-commentary writing style, Laer Pearce provides a dose of reality. But it may drive you crazy.—John Moorlach, Orange County Supervisor

Want to know what's happening in America's nuttiest state? Read *Crazifornia*. It's the most incisive, and funniest, dissection of what happened to the formerly Golden State. It's all there: punishing taxes, environmental extremism, cultural rot, Gov. Moonbeam and the Schwarzenegger meltdown. And even if you don't live there, given California's immense influence, what Laer Pearce details is coming soon to your state. — John Seiler, CalWatchDog editor

Articles and Commentary



Laer Pearce is a frequent contributor to the Daily Caller and California Watchdog. The Daily Caller is read by 5.5 million people a month and covers national and international news. California Watchdog is an independent, online news source that focuses on California government news with a reach of 12,000 unique readers a month. In addition to these regular appearances, Laer Pearce has provided commentary for such sources as the Washington Times and Builder News Magazine. Below is a selection of his recent articles:

Washington Times:

[PEARCE: Jerry Brown, oil baron](#)

The Daily Caller:

[Crazifornia: California leads the nation ... in failure](#)

[Will Obama take on the sand dune lizards?](#)

[Crazifornia: Jerry Brown shows his hand – and it's union made](#)

[In California, unions are sinking Brown's budget proposal](#)

[A Public Pension Solution ... From California?](#)

[California's public universities are the best. No really.](#)

[California agencies remain oblivious to the deficit](#)

[Keep your eyes on California](#)

California Watchdog:

[Crazifornia: Dramatic car fleet cuts aren't dramatic enough](#)

[Brown Proposes New Anti-Business Super-Agency](#)

[Brown, Harris Attack Suburban Growth](#)

[Costa Mesa Stands Up to Public Unions](#)

[CA Forward Offers Slate of Phony Fixes](#)

[A Clue to Gov. Brown's Pension Plan](#)

[Port of Call for CA's Crippled Commerce](#)

[Alt Energy Makes State Budget Redder](#)

[California's Crippling Brain Drain](#)

[Deceptive Agency to Punish Deception](#)

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