

# The Ranchos Independent



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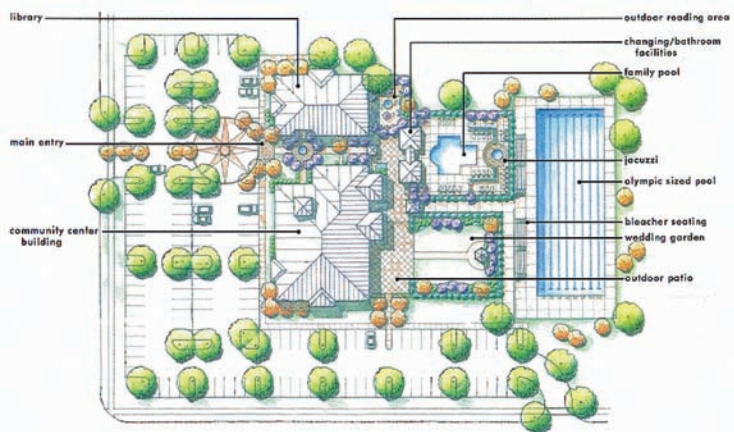
April 2007

The Official Publication of Southeastern Madera County

35¢

## Community Library Center Discussed

By Randy Bailey  
and Don Foster



An architect's rendering of a proposed Community Library Center designed specifically for the Ranchos.

On Wednesday, April 18, the Ranchos Senior Center was filled with the hopeful, the skeptical and the just plain curious as the plans for a Ranchos Community Center and Library Facility were unveiled.

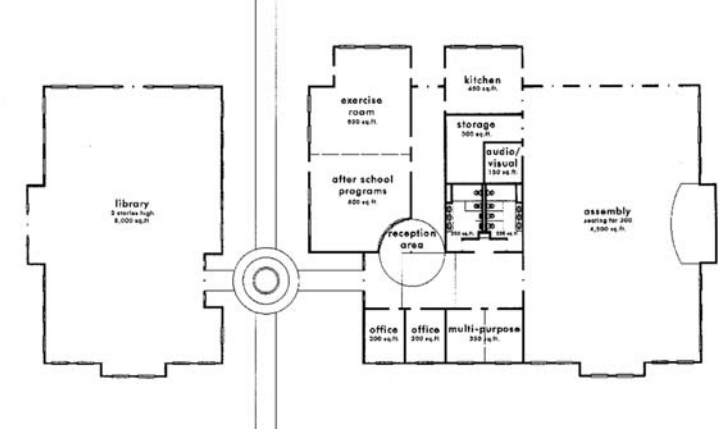
Presented by the Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce, Past President Steve Krueger showed four different architectural renderings showing four different levels of involvement for the community, but the most interest was generated by Plan "D" (see at left).

The plan calls for a meeting center with kitchen facilities, a wedding garden, exercise and after-school program rooms, an olympic-sized pool and family pool and separate library.

Krueger stressed that these plans were merely a "roadmap" to help get the Ranchos moving and that nothing was "carved in stone." He did say that the site would require approximately 5 acres and that somewhere on Avenue 12 would make for a great location. "With 5 acres there would even be enough room for a small neighborhood park," Krueger said.

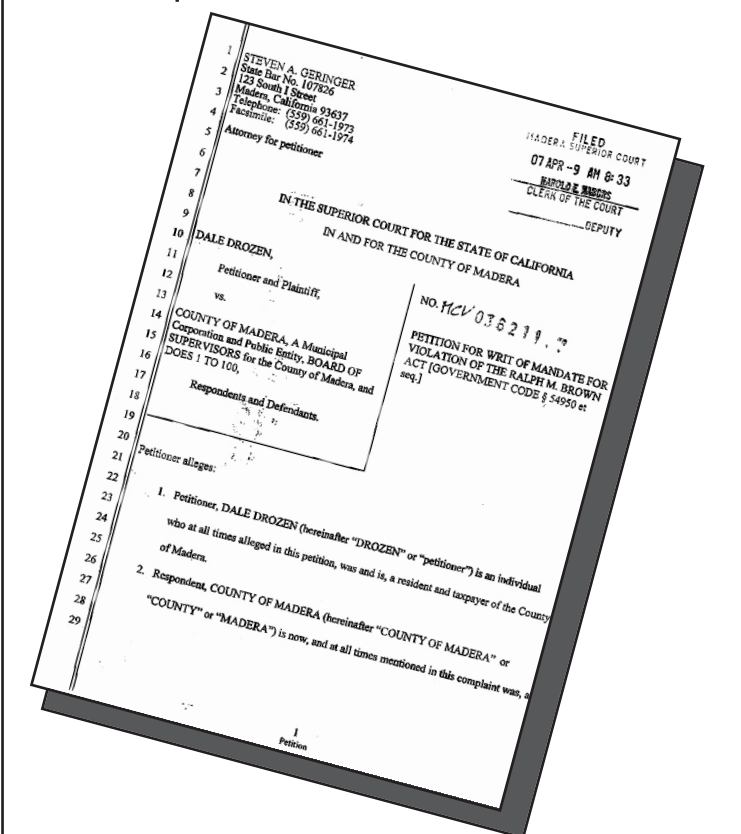
The key to bringing these plans to fruition would be the creation of a Community Services District, a special district within Madera County that would oversee the implementation of the Center.

Members of the New Library Planning Committee also attended and the consensus was they liked what they saw. The full-sized drawings are on display at the library and will also be available with more information at the Chamber booth on Flatlander's Day.



The floorplan of the same project showing a two story, 8,000 square foot library and 4,500 square foot meeting facility.

## Board of Supervisors Sued Over \$3.2 M from Ranchos



Transfer of Measure A funds from the Ranchos and foothill communities without public discussion, adherence to Brown Act at heart of suit.

By Randy Bailey

A retired firefighter from Coarsegold decided that enough was enough and has filed a civil suit in Madera County Superior Court against the County of Madera, and specifically against the Madera County Board of Supervisors, for actions that arose at the Feb. 27 Board of Supervisors meeting. At that meeting an "emergency item" was added "off agenda" and sought \$3.2 million in Measure A road funds to be transferred from the unincorporated areas of Madera County to the incorporated areas for the purpose of building a bridge over Highway

99 at Ellis Street. The vote passed 3-2 with the Ranchos' Supervisor, Frank Bigelow, and the foothills' Supervisor, Tom Wheeler, voting "no."

Dale Drozen, through his attorney Steven Geringer, says that the act by the Supervisors violates the Brown Act, the guiding principle behind open and accessible governmental meetings.

"I just want the government to be open and honest," Drozen said.

The Brown Act was passed in 1953 and applies to California lawmakers only. The idea

Please see SUIT on P. 8

## FLATLADER'S DAY IS HERE!



**Saturday, May 5**  
Parade Starts at 10 a.m.  
**SHARP!**  
Registration at 8:30 a.m.  
Parade route is Avenue 12  
from Topper to Kensington  
**IT'S NOT TOO LATE**  
to enter or volunteer!  
**645-4001**

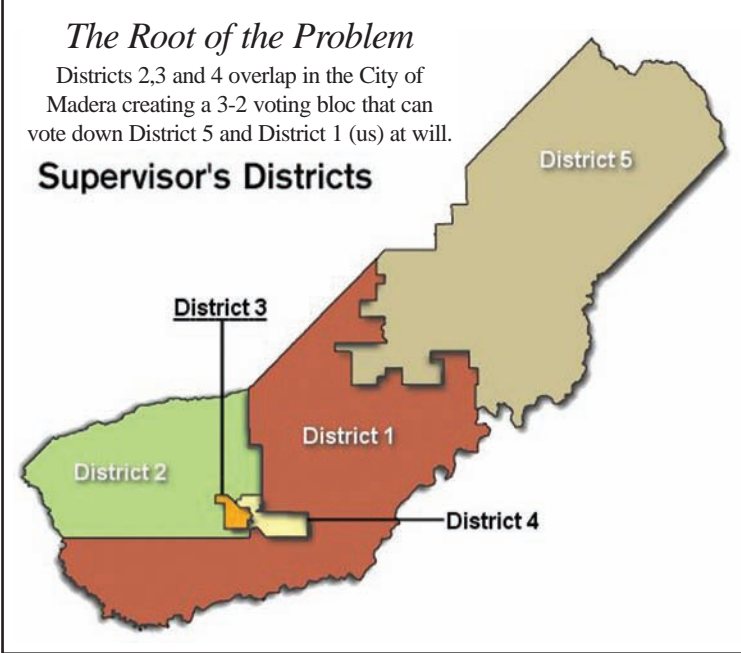
## Ranchos Martial Artists Win



Five students from Golden Valley Martial Arts brought home eight medals from the March 24 Concordia University Taekwondo Championships and welcomed the President of the World Taekwondo Federation to his first visit to the USA. This was the students' very first competition experience and a successful one at that!

**INSIDE**

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Save this date!

# AUG. 18, 2007

Madera County Fire Station 19 will hold its annual

## FIRE-B-Q DINNER • DANCE • AUCTION



4/07



### Concerned about the future of Madera County?

The Measure T Citizens' Oversight Committee will provide citizen perspective, participation and involvement in Madera County's \$213 million transportation sales tax, making sure that Measure T funds are spent as promised to the public.

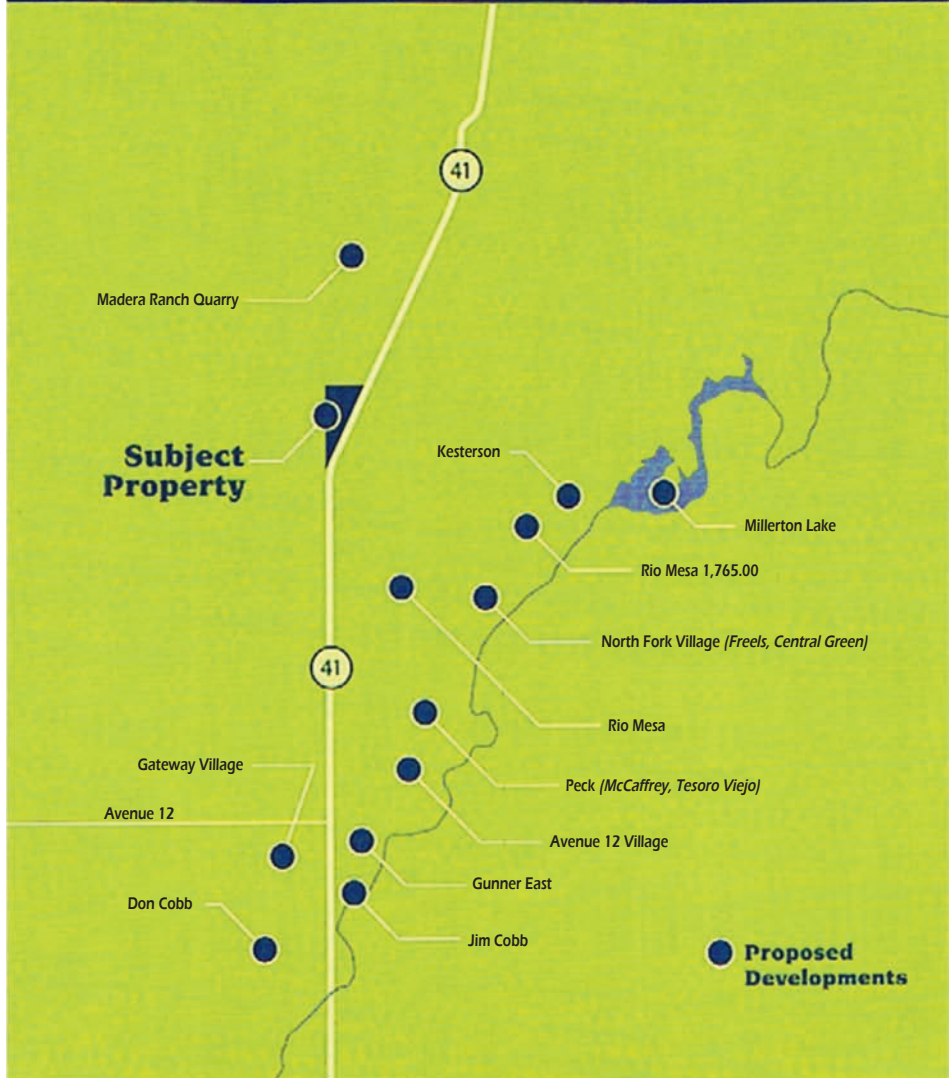
We need your help!

The **NEW** deadline for application submittal is:  
**Thursday, May 31, 2007.**

For a copy of the COC application package, please contact Richard Poythress at (559) 675-0721 or richard@maderactc.org. You may also download the application package at <http://www.maderactc.org>.

4/07

### 17.39 Acres Commercial Property Tremendous Potential - In Path of Growth **\$1,750,000**



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4/07



# 2007 Flatlander's Day

Parade Day: May 5, 2007

Group  Individual  Business

Group or Business Name \_\_\_\_\_

Individual entry or responsible person's name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Theme of Entry: \_\_\_\_\_

Will youngsters walk with the entry?  Yes  No

Approx. number of participants \_\_\_\_\_ Approx. length \_\_\_\_\_ft.

**Entry Category (select ONE which most closely suits your entry):**

- Horses (Single)  Horses (Group) Explain: \_\_\_\_\_
- Floats (Band) Name: \_\_\_\_\_
- Floats (Non-profit) Name: \_\_\_\_\_
- Floats (Business) Name: \_\_\_\_\_
- Floats (Other) Name: \_\_\_\_\_
- Children's Groups Name: \_\_\_\_\_
- Dance Groups Name: \_\_\_\_\_
- Single Entry (Children) Name: \_\_\_\_\_
- Single Entry (Adult) Name: \_\_\_\_\_
- Novelty Name: \_\_\_\_\_
- Additional information: \_\_\_\_\_

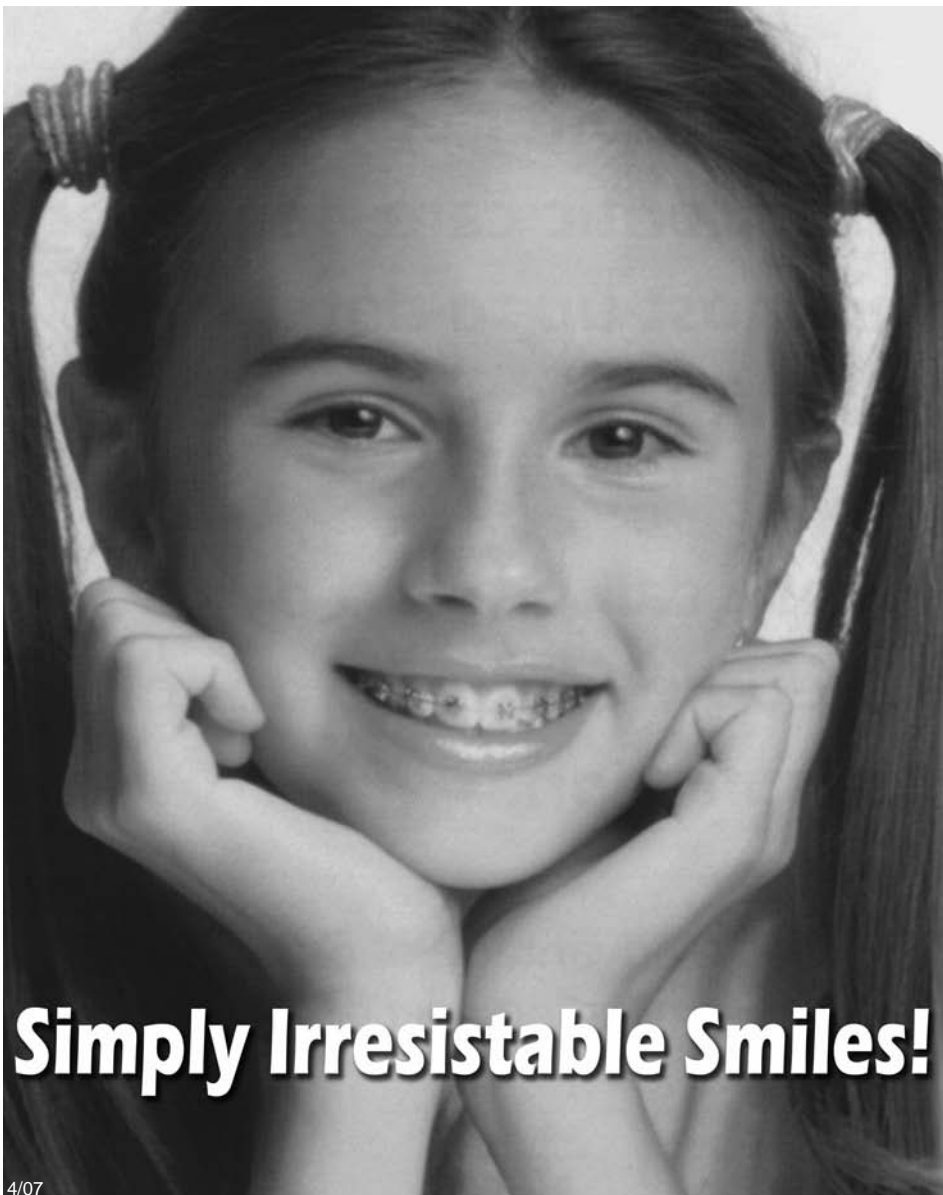
Parade begins at 10 a.m. Sharp!  
Registration of entries begins at 8:30 a.m.  
Parade route: Topper along Ave. 12 to Kensington

*The undersigned entrant and all participants agree to abide by all parade rules, follow the directions of parade officials and agree to release parade officials from any and all responsibility from loss, damage, and/or injury to any person or property as a result of participation in the parade.*

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Bring or mail this form by **April 26** to: **Golden Valley Chamber 37167 Ave. 12 Ste. 5C • Madera, CA 93636** or call **645-4001**

Parade Sponsored by the Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce, Ranchos Kiwanis and Friends of the Ranchos Library.



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## The Bookshelf

# Flatlander's Day Fast Approaches

By Ellen Mester

Flatlander's Day Parade and Craft Show is fast approaching. It's on May 5 this year. There are still spaces available for crafters and vendors. Stop by the Ranchos Library for an application. For Parade information call the Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce at 645-4001 or stop by and pick up an application. Parade entries are free. The parade entries will be judged by a panel of five judges and trophies will be awarded. We'd like to see every Ranchos school or community organization represented. There will be lots of food, crafts and fun. Let's make this the best Flatlander's Day ever!

The New Library Planning Committee will be tallying up the results of the survey that was sent out last month in the Ranchos Independent. If you did not receive one, call or visit the Ranchos Library. We want to hear what you have to say. Last week we had a guest architect speak about structural design considerations and the various costs that are involved. It was definitely an eye-opener. One way to combat a large portion of the cost would be if the land was donated rather than purchased. We know there's a generous benefactor out there that feels passionately about the importance of the library in our community. Please step forward if you are that person!

The Ranchos Library Summer Reading Program entitled, Get a Clue @ the Library, is getting closer. The kick-off night will be June 21 with music, games, puzzles and of course lots of books. And this year we will have a teen/young adult portion, thanks to Liberty High Librarian, Melanie Lewis. She will team up with the Ranchos Library to have murder mystery nights and treasure hunts for the 14-18 age group. We are really excited about getting kids of all ages to get involved and - most of all - to READ!

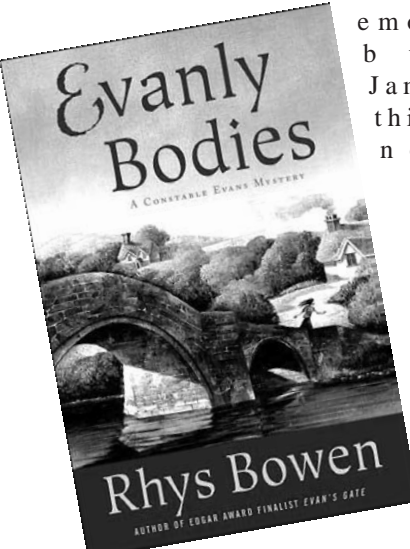
Reminders: Monday Story Time is 11 a.m. with Mrs. Anderson. The Friends of the Library meet the first Thursday of every month at 7 p.m. Everyone is welcome.

TAX FORMS are still available. We can also print any of the other tax forms for you free of charge.

### Book Recommendations

**Adult Mystery:** *Evanly Bodies* written by Rhys Bowen. Detective Constable Evan Evans of the Welsh town of Llanfair is on a new investigation of the murder of a college professor. He was shot through an open window while eating his breakfast. The evidence is scant but circumstantially it appears that his wife may be the murderer. Evan's gut instinct tells him no, but his new ramrod boss thinks otherwise. Meanwhile, Evan's new bride, Bronwen, is trying to solve her own mystery: why her new young friend, Jamila, has disappeared. Jamila's parents and her older brother want her to return to Pakistan to marry an older man in a traditional ceremony.

but Jamila thinks not.



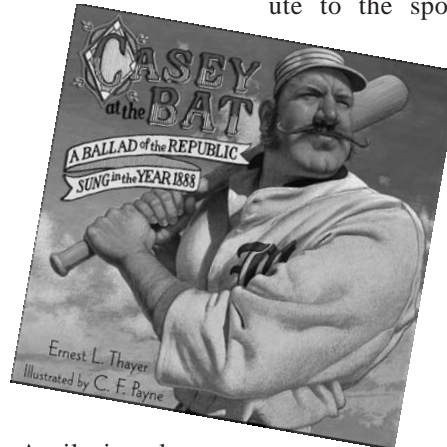
Bronwen wants to help but only makes the situation worse. As usual Evan has his hands full in this tenth book of the Evans series. This is a great series for readers who like a good mystery without all the gruesome graphic details and language used by other writers.

**Young Adult Fiction:** *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* by Mark Haddon. Wellington, the neighbor's poodle, was dead. Stabbed clear through with a garden fork.

Christopher, age 15 years, 3 months and 3 days finds Wellington one evening on his way home and is inadvertently suspected of the crime.

Christopher's response is to cast his eyes downward and deny it- which of course makes him look suspicious. But Christopher is autistic and doesn't communicate the way a typical 15 year old boy would. He doesn't like strangers or anything that deviates from his routine or schedule and if his brain is overloaded with new and unfamiliar information he covers his ears and moans - loudly. Sometimes if he really gets scared he closes his eyes and screams. Luckily Christopher's teacher Siobhan has helped him learn how to walk away, how to understand body language, what sarcasm is, and most importantly, how to do math problems to relax and refocus his brain when he's overloaded. After the unfortunate incident Christopher decides to investigate Wellington's murder in the style of Sherlock Holmes even though his father told him not to. But what Christopher discovers turns his world upside down as he moves into uncharted territory that terrifies and confuses him. Wellington's murder is the catalyst for this story but the real insight is how someone like Christopher actually thinks. The author bases his character on personal experience which brings us all to a better understanding.

**Juvenile Non-fiction:** *Casey at the Bat* by Ernest L. Thayer with illustrations by C.F. Payne. April is opening-season for baseball. This book is a perfect tribute to the sport.



April is also poetry month and Casey at the Bat is a much-recited, beloved poem. The illustrations are warm, soft tones in the style of the era. The poem is written in its original format with the addition of background information about the author and the various performers enacting the poem on stage and for the radio. I remember as a child watching a cartoon version of it on T.V. and also hearing it recited at various times. It's a great book to read aloud to people of all ages.

Check out these books and more at the library and always carry your library card: Don't leave home without it!





Editorial

# It's Time to Put Up or Shut Up

By Randy Bailey

I really love the Beatles. When I was a kid and heard their music for the first time I was completely blown away. It was like nothing I had ever heard before. Back in December I got a copy of the latest Beatles-inspired CD, *Love*, which was created as the soundtrack for the latest Cirque du Soleil extravaganza in Las Vegas. When my wife and kids heard *Love* the Beatles fire was lit anew and we planned a trip to the Love Theater at the Mirage in Las Vegas and planned a family vacation for the first week of April around the show, Calico ghost town, Hoover Dam, the Grand Canyon, the London Bridge - standard touristy stuff.

Oh yeah, we went one more place on our trip. As a matter of fact, we made it our first stop on the first day of our vacation. Here we are with the kids out of school for Spring Break and me and the wife making our first trip to Las Vegas in 10 years and where was the first place we stopped?

Castle & Cooke in Bakersfield.

Yeah, you read that right.

Ever since I met with the negotiator that the Golden Valley Unified School District hired to hammer through an agreement with Castle & Cooke, I had been bothered by something. At our meeting I had it explained to me that Castle & Cooke had no obligations to Golden Valley and were completely within their rights to offer nothing more than an empty plot of dirt and a handful of trailers and call that our next Golden Valley school. I had it explained that if we didn't hold their feet to the fire then the good people of the Ranchos would be footing the bill for all of the school costs that would be incurred as a result of Castle & Cooke developing Gateway Village at Avenue 12 and Highway 41. The only thing missing were soup lines and a huge dust storm - but there was always tomor-

row for that to be brought up.

I remember asking the negotiator if he had indeed visited any of the Castle & Cooke properties and inspected any of the schools in those properties. If Castle & Cooke was this bad, there had to be a pattern of abuse over and over and over and I was interested in what his investigation had turned up. In our conversation I found out that he had been working for our school district for almost a year and, amazingly, had never bothered to check out what other schools associated with Castle & Cooke developments thought of Castle & Cooke.

But he was looking into it.

So on the first day of my vacation, I arranged a tour of the Castle & Cooke development in Bakersfield and spent the next two hours touring one of the most attractive developments I have ever seen. I saw everything from the multimillion dollar homes on the golf course to the smaller, starter family homes and was blown away. I specifically asked to see the schools for each of these communities and was overwhelmed. Where I expected to see plots of dirt and trailers were modern, state-of-the-art facilities, all completely designed to fully integrate into the surrounding neighborhoods. They were, in a word, beautiful.

I found out that Castle & Cooke has been at the Bakersfield location for almost 20 years and has another 20-25 to go. Their shopping centers built for the communities looked like Disneyland. Everything was first class. Without exception.

Now I hear that the school board can't make the time to go down to Bakersfield to see what I saw.

Unbelievable.

It's time to put up or shut up. If there's a valid reason why Castle & Cooke should be treated like some kind of snake oil salesman then let's hear it; but that door swings both ways. Make sure that's not snake oil on *your* hands, Board.

## Random Notes

Well it's here at last and some truly believed that it was gone for good, but never underestimate the will of the people of the Ranchos when they set their collective minds to something. The annual Flatlander's Day Parade is happening and it's solely thanks to you, the volunteers. Its a classic community event that no one pays to enter and all the help is volunteered. Now THAT'S America! There is still time to sign up if you want to be in the parade. It doesn't cost a thing and you just might win a trophy! I won one last year but I'm still not sure of the category. I'm pretty sure it was for "Fat Guy in White Truck." You can also call and volunteer your services or maybe you belong to a group that would like to help out. Many hands make light work! Call the Chamber office at 645-4001 at help make this the best Flatlander's ever.

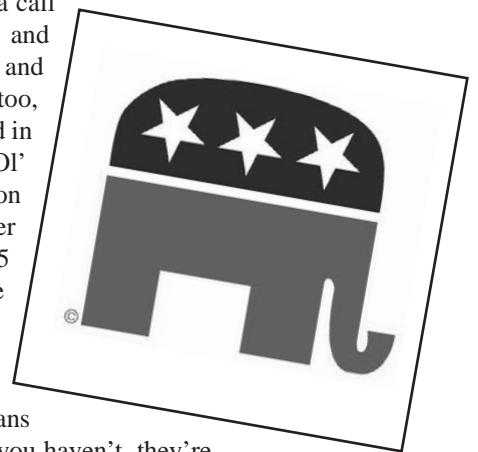


After the Flatlander's Parade and Craft Fair, head on over to Sierra View Elementary at around 5 p.m. for the annual school carnival. There are games, prizes, bounce houses, a cake walk and it's all for a great cause - our kids at Sierra View! Sierra View is on Paula and the corner of 16 1/2 in Bonnadelle. Get up there!

Speaking of outdoor events that are coming up, just around the corner is the annual Station 19 Fire-B-Q. This year it's being held at Cobb's Ranch on Saturday, Aug. 18 beginning at 6 p.m. This is a real fun event complete with dinner, dancing to live music and an auction.

If you need to buy tickets, you want to donate something to the auction or just want more information, call Debbie at 801-7703. I can tell you one thing for sure: they sell out every year. Get your tickets early or you'll be one of those people talking about the great time you missed.

For our Republican friends out there I got a call from the Republican Party of Madera County and found out they have a monthly lunch meeting and all Ranchos Republicans (and non-Republicans too, I guess) are invited. The lunches are usually held in Madera but this month it's going to be at The Ol' Kettle Restaurant on Highway 41 in Oakhurst on Monday, May 7 at 11:30 a.m. The guest speaker is going to be Madera County District 5 Supervisor Tom Wheeler, which explains the Oakhurst venue. If you need more information call 559-683-0719 or go to their website at [www.maderagop.org](http://www.maderagop.org).

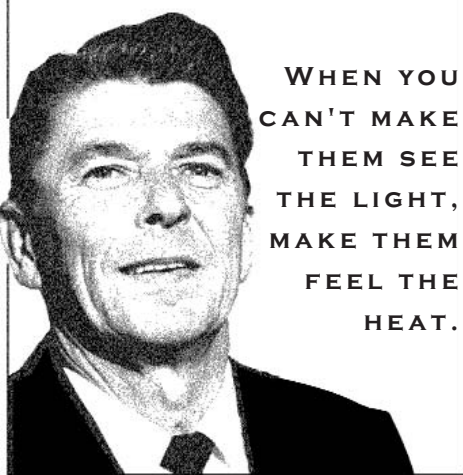


I hope you've gotten the chance to see the plans for the proposed Community Library Center. If you haven't, they're on display over at the library and we're going to be setting them up at the Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce booth at the Crafter's Fair on Flatlander's Day. Come by and take a look and talk to me - yeah, they got me manning the Chamber booth this year. Stop by and have a cigar. Talk about stuff. I'll be there.

Finally, our hearts and prayers go out to all of those who were impacted by the events at Virginia Tech. I had to explain to my kids that sometimes bad people do bad things but they truly are the exception and not the rule. My middle daughter was the most concerned and I told her to keep things in perspective. Although something terrible happened on one campus and took many lives, remember that there are thousands of campuses around the country with millions of students where absolutely nothing happened - just as nothing happens every single day. That is the rule. I also helped her understand that it wasn't a gun that killed anybody, it was the person pulling the trigger and that was where the ultimate responsibility lay. She said she understood.

I hope so.

## THE RAY GUN



**WHEN YOU CAN'T MAKE THEM SEE THE LIGHT, MAKE THEM FEEL THE HEAT.**

**RONALD REAGAN**

# The Ranchos Independent

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## Letters

Dear Editor:

Things are changing! Your local government is making big changes. Money is being spent, new laws and new ways to enforce them are being written and issues decided. Most taxpayers don't have a clue.

I know. I was one of them.

Now I sit in on meetings. I watch what is happening. Now and then I comment or stand up and protest. At most of the meetings I am virtually all alone except for the ones directly involved in a particular item on the agenda.

I need some help!

Not support of what I choose to get involved in (and I am *not* running for any office). What I am asking is that you get involved too. Look at what your government is doing and let them know your opinion. Get together with your neighbors and set it up so you go [to the Board of Supervisors' meeting] this week and then someone else goes next week. If something big is about to happen spread the word. I can show you how to find the meetings and agendas online.

The Board sent \$3.2 Million to Madera City and refused to let the citizens speak on the matter, but at the beginning of every meeting 15 minutes is set aside for the public to speak on any subject that is not on the agenda.

If you are not happy about what they did, go to the meeting and tell them.

The new code enforcement laws they are trying to pass give the county the power to appoint *anybody* to write citations; appoint the hearing officers *they want* with no stated qualifications; and wield unbelievable power to control what you can (and can't) present in your defense. But don't worry – you can always

appeal the above to the Board of Supervisors.

Don't take my word for anything. Look it up yourself.

Dale Drozen  
Coarsegold

Dear Editor:

With a growing number of children becoming involved with drugs, gangs, graffiti, vandalism and all the byproducts of a too-liberal for too-long society, one would think that keeping them focused on family involvement in an activity that is good, healthy fun would be tolerated, if not encouraged. Young families have moved to The Ranchos to escape the dangers of Fresno and to find some measure of personal freedom as well, only to find that there is no escaping one of the worst aspects of city life, and that is "nasty neighbor syndrome."

In our subdivision, our lots are 1.5 acres, with plenty of undeveloped yard for outdoor activities. My neighbor, acting on the assumption that this was, indeed, still a country where a person had a little freedom to do as he wished on his own property, built a track in his back yard for his small (one is 5 years old) sons to ride their little dirt bikes. At the designated off-road vehicle parks these children would soon be overwhelmed, frightened and put in danger by older riders on bigger, much louder and more powerful machines.

Almost everyone in the neighborhood owns an ATV of some sort and all ride

Please see **LETTERS** on P. 17



## Yosemite Sam

### The Growth Conundrum

It's been awhile since Yosemite Sam has graced the pages of the Independent, but I still have plenty to say.

A "conundrum" is defined by Webster's Dictionary as "an intricate and difficult problem" or "a question or problem having only a conjectural answer."

From my perspective, both of these definitions describe the difficult question of providing future housing for the population growth that we all know is coming to California. The California Department of Finance has recently revised their growth projections downward, for a variety of reasons, to a total population in California of 47 million by the year 2030, from the current population of just under 30 million statewide. That means that in just less than 25 years, our population in the state will increase by more than 17 million. According to the Department of Finance, most of this growth will be coming to the Central Valley and the counties of Riverside and San Bernardino in southern California. Counties like Madera, Fresno, Merced and Stanislaus are expected to increase population by more than 10 percent per year during that time.

Where will all these people live? If we assume that the average household population is five people per residence (and the Madera County average is actually less than five), then we will need to construct approximately 3.5 million new residential units to house the growth we expect in California by 2030. This is an average of about 150,000 new housing units each year statewide!

Fortunately, annual building permits in the state over the last 20 years have averaged just over 160,000. This has come, however, during two of the biggest real estate booms since post World War II.

Madera County's population is expected to grow by an average of nearly 8,000 per year during the same timeframe. Again, if we use very conservative numbers, the county will have to provide more than 1,600 new housing units each year just to keep up!

Some people will tell you that the answer is just to make it difficult (if not impossible) to grow; to basically "ignore" the problem. They will say "Make 'em live someplace else ... we don't want 'em here!" Others will recognize that the people will come, no matter what the obstacles are.

And herein lies the conundrum. Do we want to provide well-planned communities for this expected growth, or do we want to conduct "business as usual"? Do  
Please see **SAM** on P. 18

# Castle & Cooke invites you to a Townhall Meeting to discuss the status and progress of The Village of Gateway

The most current Draft Environmental Impact Report has been prepared and we hope you can join us for a discussion of the possible effect the report may have on the advancement of the Village of Gateway project.

It should prove to be both an interesting and informative evening.

**Wednesday, May 2, 2007**  
**7:00 p.m.**

**Townhall to be held at the Ranchos/Hills Senior Center  
located at 37330 Berkshire, Madera Ranchos • Refreshments will be served**



# World-Class Wine Tasting, Food Comes to Rancho Vista del Rio

*A Celebration of Wine* raises funds for CSUFresno Viticulture & Enology Department with fine food, wines and desserts.

Plan on attending this year's 25th Anniversary of A Celebration of Wine on June 3 between 3 and 6 p.m. at the Rancho Vista del Rio in Madera – the Borba family ranch – located at Highway 99 and the San Joaquin River. A Celebration of Wine brings over 100 West Coast wineries plus approximately 40 local restaurants to Madera along the tranquil San Joaquin River. As you stroll through a park-like setting under a beautiful umbrella of trees, it's a perfect way to enjoy some of the finest wines offered on the West Coast. You'll also enjoy sampling foods prepared by some of Central California's most prestigious restaurants.



tion provided by Barrels Unlimited to learn about the process of barrel making. In addition to an afternoon of fine wine and food, attendees may also participate in Central California's largest Silent Wine Auction featuring many large format bottles of wine. This year, a special commemorative 25th Anniversary barrel made by Barrels Unlimited will be available in the auction. Another favorite is Phyllis Neufeld's art exhibit where purchases made during the event benefit this worthwhile fundraiser. Before heading home, plan on coffee and desserts while enjoying music from the Joe Lenigan Band.

A Celebration of Wine is the major fundraiser for the Viticulture & Enology Department at California State University, Fresno. It benefits the Vincent E. Petrucci Library located on campus along with student assistance programs. Presented by the CSUF Viticulture & Enology Alumni Association, this annual event draws up to 2,500 wine and food enthusiasts. Visit the Fresno State Pavilion featuring the award-winning Fresno State Winery and other food items currently produced on campus, or visit a cooperage demonstra-

Desserts, dancing or just talking are the perfect way to top off a wonderful day of wine and food tasting. Remember: up to 125 wineries in one place! Attendance at A Celebration of Wine is limited with tickets available in advance for \$70 per person (Guests must be 21 years of age or older to attend) or \$80 if available at the gate. Tickets are now on sale at both Old Doc's locations, Eau de Vie, Vino 100 and online by visiting [www.acelebrationofwine.com](http://www.acelebrationofwine.com) or by calling 559-244-5741.

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5	8	3	6	4	9	3	8	5
2	9	4	7	3	8	1	6	2
1	8	9	6	2	4	5	7	3
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9	4	8	3	1	7	2	5	6
6	1	7	9	5	2	4	3	8

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4/07

*The Stock Report*

## Class of "007" Draws to a Close

By Audrey Stock

Hi neighbors,  
I hope everyone had a wonderful Easter. For both students and teachers, Easter is included in a week's spring vacation. Is Easter a time to get toys and eat candy? I guess that is the reason that the teachers came back to work on Monday after Easter but the students got a day off to get some of the candy out of their systems. My family has a tradition of going to Hanford to my granddaughter's house for a family Easter Brunch. When children grow up it is hard to continue traditions that were started when they were little unless you really make the effort. When my granddaughter decided to continue the Easter Brunch tradition, I was delighted.

Now that the Easter Parade has passed us by it is time to put on your thinking caps and develop and design a float for the May 5 Flatlander's Parade. We finally have a theme from the Chamber of Commerce, which is "Spring in the Ranchos". If you haven't gotten involved in the Flatlander's Parade, you have really missed out on a great Madera Ranchos tradition. Any one can be in the Parade. Just stop at the Chamber office in the Maywood Center and pick up a form. That is the easy part – then you get a few people together and build a float. It really is a lot of fun. There will also be a Craft Fair on May 5 at the Maywood Center from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

There is a lot going on in Golden Valley Unified right now. Marty Butt, the consultant with Leadership Associates, has closed the time for applications for superintendent for our school district. She has told us that there are some good "fits"

from the applicant pool that will make an exceptionally good superintendent for us. I pray that she is right. Your school board trustees interviewed candidates on Saturday, April 21. We can use all of your prayers that we pick the right one.

Negotiations are going forward with the Castle and Cooke developers. Castle and Cooke has suggested that the school board trustees take a trip to Bakersfield with them to see their project there. We are having trouble finding a time when all of the board members are free to take this all day trip. Golden Valley has been informed that the county has scheduled a public hearing before the Madera County Planning Commission for May 22, at which time public testimony will be considered by the Planning Commission with regard to the Castle and Cooke Gateway Project.

On April 26 the 2007 Academic Pentathlon Super Quiz will be held at the Liberty High School gymnasium at 7 p.m. This year's topic is "Medieval Europe." These are middle school students from all over Madera County. Winning teams will receive awards.

The Liberty High Senior Class of 2007 is quickly getting close to graduation. Graduation will be held on May 31, 2007. The Sober Graduation Committee is planning for a great "double-0-seven" celebration. After the graduation, the graduates come back for a night of food, games, music, dancing, raffles and door prizes in the Liberty cafeteria and theater. These incentives plus a car given away to some lucky graduate at the end of the night will keep the graduates at the party all night

Please see **STOCK** on P. 18

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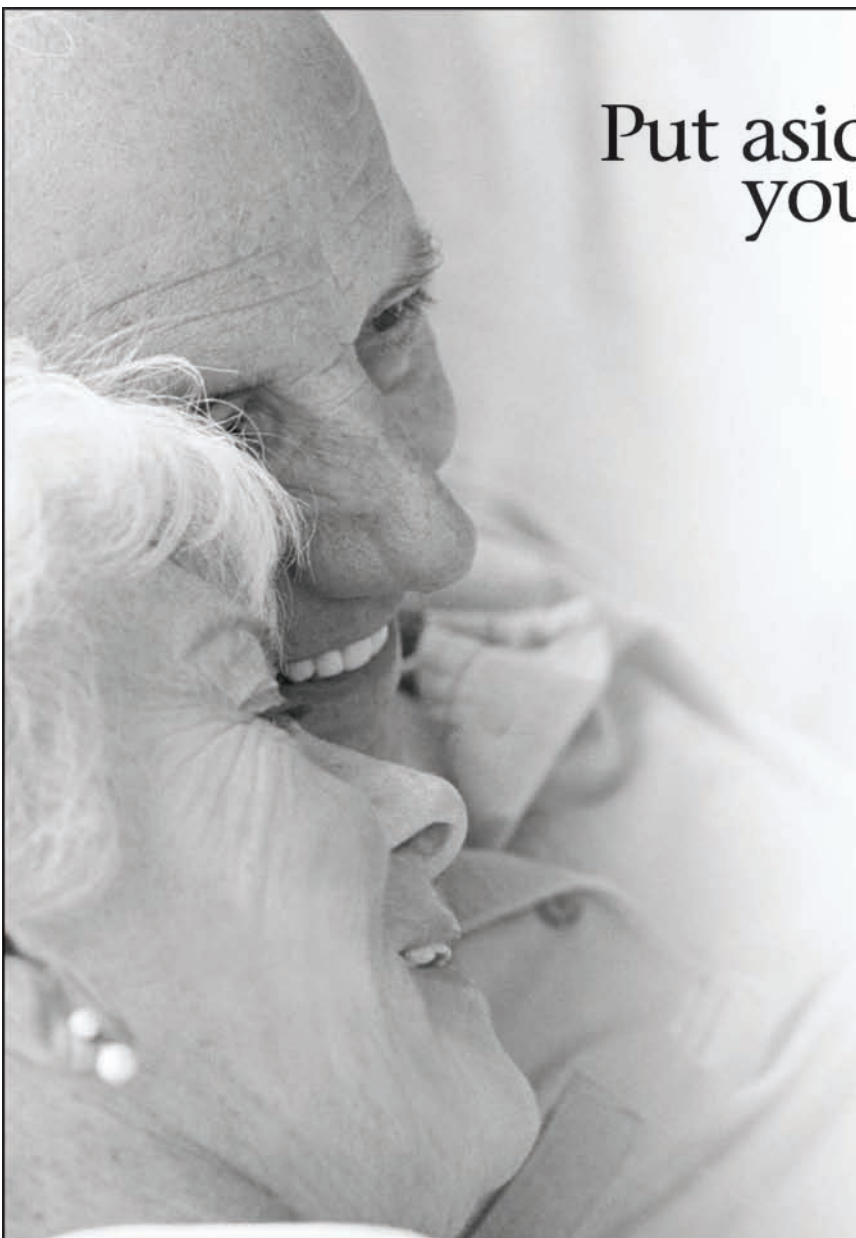
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# Madera Artist Paints the Valley



Artist Claudia Fletcher shows some of her work at her art booth at the recent "Clovisfest" streetfair event held in Clovis.

By Randy Bailey

When it comes to western painting the mind immediately thinks of Remington ... and Russell ... and Fletcher?

Well, maybe not yet, but someday. Claudia Fletcher is an award-winning artist who specializes in western themes. Whether it's a horse or a cowboy's favorite dog, Fletcher has painted it. That's not to say that she's limited to just western themes; it's just that the horse is where she began drawing as a child and elements of western life are what most appeal to her.

Born and raised in Madera, Fletcher now calls Clovis home and from there has been slowly painting the Valley from one end to another. Available to paint portraits of a favorite horse or dog, Fletcher has also gained quite a following as a muralist. Here in Madera County she was the artist behind the murals at Vineyard 208 just northeast of the Ranchos. There she painted the end of the barrel room with a three-dimensional painting of another barrel room, giving the illusion that the room opened up into a seemingly endless room. She also did a painting on one wall of a window, but the view out of the painted window is a landscape of what the winery will look like when it is eventually finished. Winery owner Lynda Whelchel calls it her "window into the future." The effects are called trompe l'oeils, which is French for "fools the eye."



Fletcher majored in art at Immaculate Heart College in Los Angeles and then ventured into illustrating for advertising before she struck out on her own and began her art business. As mentioned above, western themes are her first love, but her repertoire of murals includes a painting of Yosemite on the side of a garage, a jungle with 11 monkeys in the bedroom of a little boy, an underwater scene in the home of someone who longed for the ocean and countless fairy castles for little girls' rooms throughout the Valley. Add in Noah's ark, Mother Goose and various beach scenes and you have quite a portfolio.



Her portraits are where her passion lies, however. She has entered and won local art shows and she has become the official painter of the annual Clovis Rodeo poster. She has displayed work at the Madera County Arts Council's Circle Gallery since it opened and when you drive by Borba Ranch on Highway 99 at Avenue 7, that's her sculpture of a calf being roped above the sign.

Quite an impressive body of work. Maybe her next masterpiece will be for you.

SUIT cont. from P. 1

behind it was to eliminate secret meetings and backroom deals. Its introductory languages states: "The people of this State do not yield their sovereignty to the agencies which serve them. The people, in delegating authority, do not give their public servants the right to decide what is good for the people to know and what is not good for them to know. The people insist on remaining informed so that they may retain control over the instruments they have created."

The heart of Drozen's case is that the people of Madera County were not given

any notice of the intent to discuss and transfer the funds. Supervisor Bigelow offered a motion to allow just that, but it was voted down by Supervisors Domenici, Moss and Rodriguez.

"All I'm asking is that they have open meetings and tell the public what they're going to do," Drozen added.

Drozen's suit seeks that the Board's action be deemed null and void and set aside. He further seeks attorney's fees, the cost of the suit and any other relief the court deems proper.

Because the suit is pending, Supervisors are not allowed to talk about the case.

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4/07

*Garden Tips*

**No Green Thumb with Vegetables? Try Two: Tomatoes and Sweet Corn**

By Michelle Le Strange

You just can't beat the taste of home-grown produce! If you have the space and sunshine, but not the burning desire to be a veggie gardener, then just try two: tomatoes and sweet corn. Barbecues and picnics taste like summer with these veggies complementing the meal.

Tomatoes: Novice growers should keep it simple and only plant a few tomatoes so that watering, weeding and stringing does not become overwhelming. If you have the knack and zeal for growing vegetables then choose slicers, dicers, pasters and a cherry and heirloom or two. Don't go hog wild on any one type unless you are up for the challenge.

Varieties are the name of the game with tomatoes these days. Nurseries offer new lines and tried and true standards. Pick up any gardening magazine and they'll review their favorites. Go for it or just stick to the basics. Either way if you follow a few tips, you won't be disappointed.

Once spring rains stop get ready to plant 10 to 20 individual tomato plants to feed a family of four from the fourth of July to Halloween. To guarantee success choose several different varieties and make sure that a couple are indeterminate (ones that grow and keep fruiting until stopped by frost or disease). Since most of us buy six packs from the nursery, consider planting just three from each six pack and share the rest with a neighbor or friend. That way you can try more varieties. Also make three sequential plantings about three weeks apart.

Work the ground with a tiller, adding compost, manure, and fertilizer before forming beds that are 5 feet wide and as long as you dare. Run a furrow down each side to lay the garden hose or place drip tape on bed top. Transplant seedlings two feet apart and train the indeterminate tomatoes up a trellis system and the determinate varieties in tomato cages. Start the support systems early, not later when the plants are full of fruit.

The first few weeks require hose watering close to the small plants. Gradually move the water line to the furrows. By then, run water deeply and regularly, but not too often. The water will move laterally into the bed and reach the tomato roots. Avoid getting the top of the beds wet, which encourages weeds and disease. Tomatoes will form a deep root system. Too much water creates fruit with less taste. Drip systems need to be run long enough to wet the root zone.

Tomatoes do not need a lot of fertilizer. If big vines develop with no fruit it usu-

ally means that the nights are too hot for pollination. Growing several varieties helps minimize the chances of them all flowering simultaneously during a heat spell.

Harvest as soon as tomatoes color up fully. Pick often and never put tomatoes in the refrigerator. Treat them like bananas and you'll be more satisfied with their flavor.

Sweet corn: Sweet corn is easier to grow than tomatoes, however stalk disposal at the end of the season is more cumbersome. The novice gardener should plant just one block of corn the first year. Sweet corn does best when planted in small blocks of four or more rows. Rows can be 30-40 inches apart and seed should be planted about 12 inches apart. We do not recommend planting corn in a single row, because poor pollination will result in ears with missing kernels.


Plant only one variety of corn in a block and if you grow several blocks, then be sure to separate them to prevent cross pollination between varieties.

There are three types of sweet corn varieties. Standard sugary (SU) types are the older varieties in which sugar in the kernels converts rapidly to starch after harvest (e.g. Jubilee, Silver Queen) and these are actually great for the home garden. Sugary enhanced (SE) and super sweet (SS) types possess genes which increase sweetness and slow the conversion of sugar to starch after harvest (e.g. Kandy Korn, How Sweet It Is, Early Xtra Sweet), which are used by commercial growers and are often considered too sweet by some home gardeners.

Harvest corn at the milk stage (push thumbnail into a kernel and if kernel is plump and milk pops out, the ear is ready to pick). Husks on mature ears feel firm when grasped. Use corn immediately after picking.

Worms may be a problem, but rarely do we recommend spraying for them in the home garden. Just pick them off tomatoes while growing and cut tips off sweet corn prior to cooking.


*Michelle Le Strange is a University of California Master Gardener. Master Gardeners are members of communities who are trained by UC Cooperative Extension experts in different aspects of plant science and then volunteer to extend that information to their community. The mission of the Master Gardener program is to provide research-based information for gardening practices and technologies of home horticulture, integrated pest management and environmental resource conservation.*



**The Garden Bug**

Your local charities likely need help keeping their properties serviced. Consider donating work such as lawn-mowing, tree-trimming, hauling away yard refuse, pulling weeds and planting flowers to nearby soup kitchens, homeless shelters, animal shelters, etc. so their volunteers can focus on their main duties.

**Good deed gardening**



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# New Ownership for Ranchos Curves

By Carrie Padgett

The Madera Ranchos Curves fitness center changed owners on April 1. Jennifer Romine started as a member in 2003, became assistant manager a year ago and is now purchasing the franchise from original owners, Cory McMechan and Joan Madaus. McMechan and Madaus live out of the area and wanted to see someone local take over. When the business became available, Romine was ready.

"I know what Curves did for me," Romine said. "When I started I was a typical stay-at-home mom watching my weight go up and I was miserable. So I joined Curves. I've lost 35 pounds and about 22 inches. It's great for all women, young or old."

Romine is enthusiastic about all that Curves offers. "I've totally changed how I eat and cook from all the things I've learned here," She said. "Whether or not you need to lose weight, exercise is great for our bones and muscles. It releases endorphins that help us feel good. It prevents disease and arthritis. It does it all."

The Curves workout combines aerobics, strength training, and stretching and takes about 30 minutes. Employees train new members on the machines. Other equipment is also available, including weights, exercise balls and weighted hoops.

Jodi Camp is a recent member. She joined in November 2006 to "... get healthy and lose some weight," she said. Camp has lost 24 pounds and 13 inches, but is grateful for other benefits as well. "I have more energy. It's given me more confidence. Curves offers lots of health bene-

fits, as well as a place to meet new people and make friends."

Michelle Hodgson joined in June 2002 and began the workouts in conjunction with following Weight Watchers. "I've gained my health for sure," Hodgson said. "It's great for a busy lifestyle. It's easy to get in the recommended 30 minutes, three times a week." Hodgson's teenage daughter, Amanda, joined two months after her mother. "It's been good for us to workout together," Hodgson said.

Longtime member Marcella Weed agreed. She admits to "pushing 85 years old," and has been a member since August 2002, logging in about 600 workouts. Weed credits Curves and a healthy lifestyle with her excellent physical condition. "It's kept me limber, my muscle tone is good. I'm extremely healthy," she said. "All exercise is beneficial, and Curves has helped me to stay fit."

All the Curves clients agree that Romine will be a dynamic new owner. "It's bittersweet to say goodbye to Cory and Joan," Hodgson said, "but Jennifer will be terrific." Camp concurs. "Jennifer knows all about the business and is very helpful," she said.

Romine will be joined by trainers Elena Valenzuela and Laurie Schooley in keeping the women of Madera Ranchos fit and healthy. "I want Curves to be a place that you leave feeling whole, in your mind, body, and spirit," she said. "I want women to leave happy."

Romine is planning a grand re-opening celebration in conjunction with the annual Flatlanders Day Parade on May 5. Curves is located at 37167 Avenue 12, in the Ranchos.

# Madera Co. Sheriff's Explorers Host Mammoth Yard Sale May 5

In their ongoing effort to keep their unit afloat, 14 members of the Madera County Sheriff's Explorers, their advisors and deputies, plan to mount a mammoth yard sale on May 5 at the Madera County Sheriff's Department at 14143 Road 28, Madera from 7 a.m. until everything is gone. All proceeds raised from the event will benefit projects, monthly mandatory training, annual competitions and conferences.

The Madera County Sheriff's Explorers' purpose is to provide Madera County youth hands-on experience with the Department, helping youth explore the possibility of a future with law enforcement. Students enrolled in the Explorer program learn the basics which include: Police Radio Techniques, Patrol Procedures, Arrest and Seizures, Defense Tactics, First Aid, Traffic Control and Criminal Law.

There are six basic requirements to join and remain in the program. They include:

- 1) Must be at least 14 years old or have completed eighth grade.
- 2) Must be enrolled in school with a 2.0 GPA and NO FAILING GRADES.
- 3) No serious contacts or arrests.
- 4) Be in good physical condition with weight proportional to height.
- 5) Have parental or guardian

approval.

- 6) Successfully pass a background check.

Sheriff John Anderson says one of the main objectives of the Explorers program is promoting leadership and team unity. "No agency," he says, "can survive without it. Team unity can mean the difference between life and death."

A number of Explorers who graduated from the Explorer program have become Madera County Sheriff's Deputies, including Undersheriff Frank Benard, Mountain Detective Larry Rich, Mountain Deputies Jacob Tallmon and Joseph Wilder, 2005 Medal of Honor for Bravery recipient Deputy Jeff Thomas and, most recently, 911-Communications Specialist Miguel Hernandez. When Hernandez graduated from the Explorer program he was hired full-time to work for the department's Dispatch Center.

The program - which is affiliated with the Boy Scouts of America - operates under the direction of Madera County Sheriff's Community Service Officer Joann Evans. Anyone interested in learning about the program can either call Evans at 559-658-2555, or log on to the Madera County Sheriff's Explorers official website at [www.msexplorers.org](http://www.msexplorers.org).

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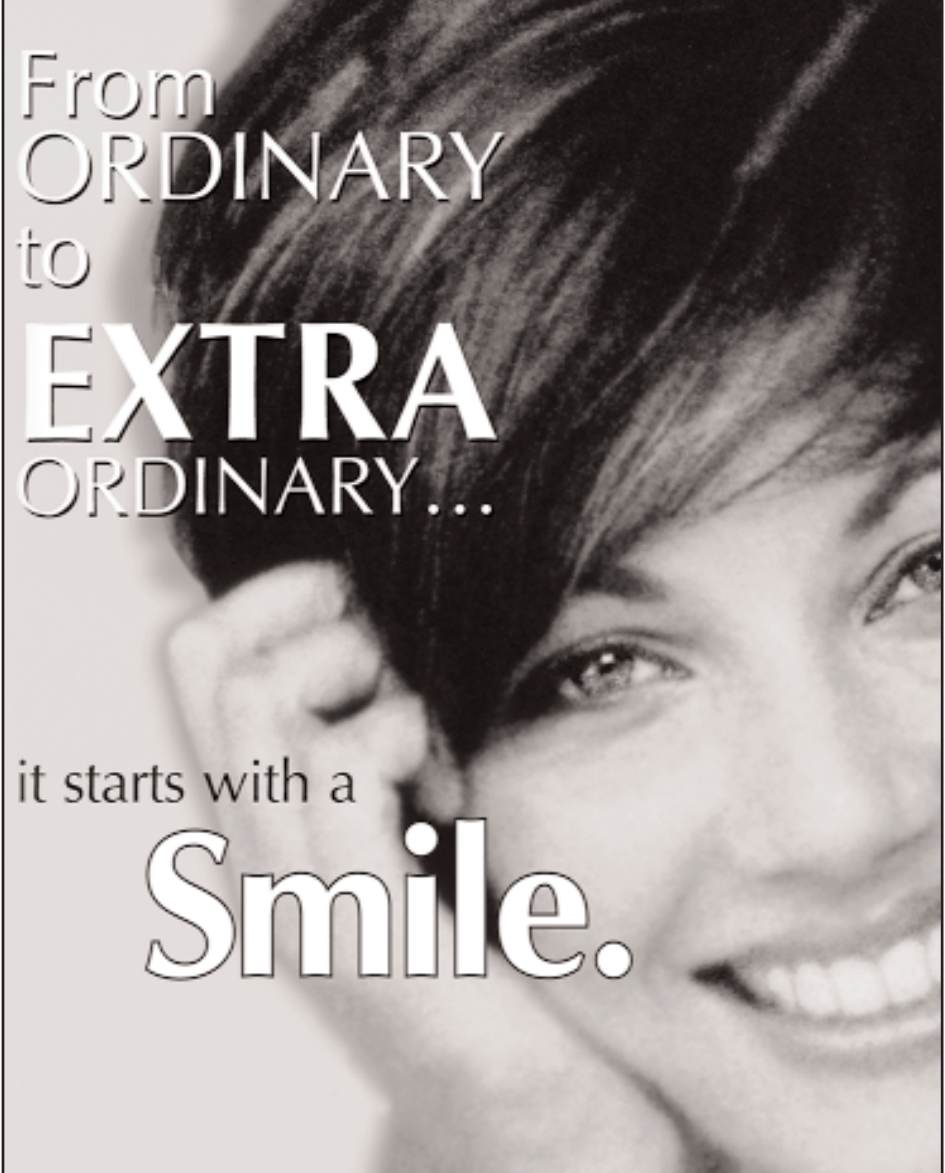


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by Linda Thistle

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## Liberty High Passes WASC Test

By Ashley Story

Graduation day: Your name is called and you walk up to accept your diploma, your ticket to the future. For that piece of paper to be recognized as a valid document of high school completion, Liberty High School must meet the criteria set up by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, or as it is more simply known, WASC.

WASC recently paid a visit to Liberty High School and their overall feedback was quite favorable. Though it was a fairly stress-filled and inconvenient three days, it was absolutely necessary to the future of Liberty and its students. The tedious preparations, interrupted classes and numerous substitute teachers were clearly worth the strain. The overall view of the campus, staff and students could best be summed up with what head of the WASC visiting committee Steve Tietjen said at the final WASC meeting: "This school has a setting for students that would make me comfortable sending my own children here." Liberty high School Principal Andrew Alvarado said that the committee believed our best qualities were, "Our culture, respectful students, safe environment and high standards."

While most of the feedback was praise, there was necessary critique. The negatives were still mild and, "... they had to try very hard to find anything for us to improve on," Alvarado said.

WASC's main area of concern was the math gap, a prime example of their excessive scrutiny since Liberty High School, "ranks first in the county in narrowing the achievement gap," said

Alvarado. With such an evaluation, Alvarado is quite confident that we will be granted the longest term of six years until the next visit.

One of the other issues the WASC committee noticed was the need for a standardized grading scale, meaning that different teachers who teach the same subject need to follow the same grading scale. For example, if tests account for 40 percent of the grade for one Algebra 1 teacher, the same should be true for all other Algebra teachers.

Along with grading standards, there was also a need for more focus on the benchmarks. Teachers need to evaluate how valid benchmarks are at measuring progress. While teachers are devoting more attention to benchmarks, students are encouraged to put more effort into the yearly state testing. A school's API score is a major factor in the WASC evaluation and Liberty's 89 point increase last year will positively influence the final report. Last year will definitely help Liberty receive longer terms and overall prestige.

Not only were teachers and students scrutinized, but parents as well. The committee expressed concern over parents' reluctance to send their sons or daughters to four-year universities. They were very clearly impressed by the high standards set by the school and district, but disappointed with the lack of motivation from parents.

If Liberty does receive the six-year term many are anticipating, there will need to be much cooperation and improvement. Even though WASC was generally impressed, there is always room for improvement.



Webster elementary students cheer at the success of their food drive for area freeze victims.

## Kids Gather Food for Freeze Victims

Golden Valley Unified School District schools participated in a food drive for area farm workers. The goal was to collect as much money and canned food items as possible to donate to area farm workers who may have been affected by the recent freeze and crop damage. All students, as usual, exceeded expectations.

A big thank you for Pizza Factory's participation and GVUSD staff for encouraging the kids to bring cans and for collecting and counting them. The District would also like to thank all who participated in the process and donated to area families.

## 800 API ... Here We Come!

By Jonathan Hensley

With the California Standardized Tests less than a month away, the number LHS students will hear more than any other number is 800. This is the API goal set by LHS principal Andrew Alvarado and the district for this year.

Last year the API goal was 750. With the help of incentives, Liberty students surpassed that goal with a score of 769. With an improvement of 89 points, this was the fifth best score in the Valley.

Alvarado is currently having meetings with the leadership team to find out what the students want as reasonable incentives for this year. Some of the incentives that have come up are a second semester trip to Sierra Summit or the water park along with some of the other incentives from last

year such as extra lunch time and Friday off-campus privileges for gold members.

This year there may be an extra twist to make Liberty students want to achieve the goal of 800. Students will have to "defend" their current five minute current lunch extension. If students do not reach the API goal this year they can wave goodbye to the 40-minute lunch.

For the most part, the requirements for the green and gold level qualifications will be the same. There will be assemblies with more information. Also to be expected are motivational assemblies and speakers to help get students excited about doing well on the tests.

Students can give suggestions to the leadership team if they have ideas and would like them to be considered by the administration.

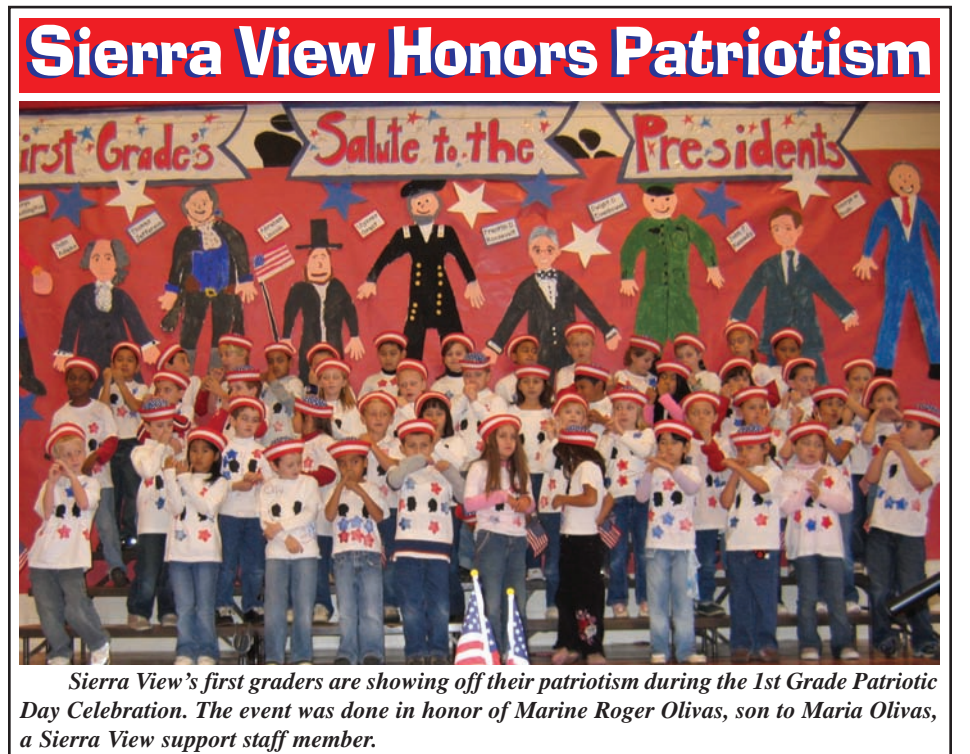


## March Madness Leads to Silver

The Webster Wolverines represented Golden Valley in the first ever Special Olympics Basketball Regional tournament and brought home a silver medal.

Wearing maroon and gold, the Wolverines were the only elementary school participating at the tournament. Upon entering the Hoover High Gym in Fresno, the opponents appeared to be from the "land of the giants." Many of the opponents were standing

as tall as 6-foot 5-inches, which at times made it difficult to defend such towers. Due to Webster athletes' quickness and agility, opponents found it very difficult to defend them in spite of their size differences. Webster players were intense and determined to place in the top three medal contentions and in the end, out of 10 teams in Webster's division, the team ended up placing second. A fabulous victory for Webster's first year of basketball!



Sierra View's first graders are showing off their patriotism during the 1st Grade Patriotic Day Celebration. The event was done in honor of Marine Roger Olivas, son to Maria Olivas, a Sierra View support staff member.



### Vision Statement

Golden Valley Unified School District is committed to creating and maintaining an innovative learning community based in excellence.



# GVUSD Students Increase PEP With Break the Barriers Grant



Students doing a hula hoop activity in the after-school program at Sierra View.

The PEP Grant is a five-year funded grant through the U.S. Department of Education that was received by Break the Barriers. Golden Valley was chosen to participate as a pilot district in the grant. The grant is designed to help students become more physically active through exercise, to teach the importance of good nutritional habits and to show how special needs students can actively participate with their classmates. Interested teachers

received extensive training from Dr. Gail Gorke of the "Kids Can" program beginning in November, 2006. In January, 2007, 20 high school students joined the teachers in learning how to implement the after-school program.

The after-school program began in February with 87 students registered to participate at Webster and 50 students at Sierra View. The program is also implemented at Valley Teen Community Day School. High school students are paid through the grant to work at the two elementary schools.



High school students and teachers practice a balloon activity that required a lot of body movement.

Both the teachers and high school students get rave reviews from the trainers and personnel at Break the Barriers.

The teachers participating are Katharine Cuttone from Lincoln; Jill Derkalousdian and Jon Perez from Sierra View; Ellen Williams, Melissa Garcia, Amy Bezzerides and Shawn Hardcastle from Webster; and Jesus Castillo and Ara Derkalousdian from Valley Teen.



Teachers and students working together in developing keys of leadership.

# Hawks Baseball Wins 1st Tourney



The Liberty Hawks won their first-ever baseball tournament title with an 11-1 victory over Chowchilla to win the 51st Annual Selma Kiwanis Baseball Tournament. Hawks pitcher Chris Gonzales was named Tournament Most Valuable Player and the victory marked the first time a Division V team has won the tournament. Hawks pitching allowed only four runs in the entire tournament.

## Senior Report

# Spring Festival Exceeds Expectations

By Eleanore Burchell

The Ranchos/Hills Senior Center, located at 37330 Berkshire, is celebrating the results of our 15th Annual Spring Home and Garden Festival held on Saturday, April 7. The weather was perfect – not too hot or too cold – just perfect! Thanks to Pat Brunett and her helpers, the day started at 6:30 a.m. with a breakfast of biscuits and sausage gravy. Many came to enjoy this. Then came snack time with hot cinnamon rolls and coffee. Hamburgers, hot dogs and BBQ salmon patty sandwiches were served for lunch along with chips and cold drinks.

With all the excellent food being offered, we really had a happy crowd of buyers who bought trees, shrubs, flowering plants and Treasure House items. Again, the Master Gardeners came to answer questions about plants and diagnose pests and diseases. Thank you Master Gardeners for your time and expertise. The homemade bake sale was the largest in the history of our annual festivals.

We want to thank the San Joaquin Gunslingers for stopping in and having several shootouts during our sale. Disk Jockey Oscar Anaya volunteered to come and play our vintage music which was really enjoyable and appreciated by our seniors. Thank you again, Oscar. The volunteer fire department with their rescue truck was a favorite for the little kids. Fingerprinting of the children was held in the main building. We literally had something for everyone. If you missed this year, plan ahead for the first Saturday in April 2008. We will be there and hope to see you.

Our garden staff was extremely busy as the plants and trees went out by the wagon loads. Flats of pretty flowering plants were also available. What is one person's discard is another person's treasure and our Treasure House had everything from a good used refrigerator, sofa and end table, to the smallest little baby socks. Our next monthly sale will be held on Saturday, May 5 from 8 a.m. to noon.

We don't want you to forget us during the week so remember the plants, produce and boutique sections are available Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.; Tuesday, 6 to 9 p.m.; and Thursday evenings between 6 and 9 p.m.

Our next travel adventure will be Oct. 9 through Oct. 22. We will fly to the East Coast then board a bus. We plan to see the fall colors of the Eastern U.S. and Canada plus many other sights in the area. For more information or if interested in joining the group, call Joann at 645-4864 as an immediate deposit is needed to hold a spot for you.

A Panama Canal cruise is in the planning for next April. Hopefully more information will be available in next month's article.

The May Birthday and Anniversary

celebration is scheduled for May 19 at 11 a.m. at IHOP in Madera. The April Birthday and Anniversary celebration was held on April 14 at Sizzler in Fresno. Thirty-one of our members attended and left very happy and full.

Remember Tuesday BINGO nights from 5:30 p.m. to 9 p.m.

If you need someone to laugh with, come join our Thursday evening potlucks with games played afterward. There is a lot of fun here. Remember, laughter is good for your body and soul and being happy does not mean everything is perfect; it means you have decided to see beyond the imperfections!

### More Facts and Fun

A nutritionally balanced lunch program Monday through Friday 11:30 a.m. Suggested price for 60 years and older is \$1.75. Reservations are needed a day in advance so remember to call Joann at 645-4864. There is still room in the well-attended exercise class on Monday, Wednesday and Fridays, 10:15 – 11:30 a.m. The Line Dancing class has been changed to Fridays at 1 p.m. This combines fun and exercise. You need not be a member to attend these classes. The attendance has been growing but there is always room for one more: you! Come to think of it, there is room for two: you and your friend.

### Up and Coming Events

Monthly Sale, Saturday, May 5, 8 a.m. to noon

Birthday and Anniversary celebration, Saturday, May 19, 11 a.m. IHOP in Madera

#### Weekly Events

Monday through Friday Lunch Program, 11:30 a.m. (Reservations needed, call Joann 645-4864)

Monday, Exercise Class, 10:15 – 11:30 a.m.

Tuesday, Pinochle, noon until?

Tuesday, BINGO, 5:30 to 9 p.m. (Hot dogs, hamburgers, desserts and more available)

Wednesday, Exercise Class, 10:15 – 11:30 a.m.

Wednesday, noon to 1 p.m. Card BINGO

Wednesday, 3:30 – 5:30 p.m. Watercolor Painting Class

Thursday, 6 to 9 p.m. Potluck then Hand & Foot, Pinochle or other games (Please bring your own plate and silverware)

Friday, Exercise Class, 10:15 – 11:30 a.m.

Friday, 1 p.m. Line Dancing Class

Please feel free to come visit our Senior Center and get acquainted with our members. We welcome you to come and be one of us as our organization offers and promotes social, educational and civic activities in order to provide a better quality of life for all senior citizens. You have received an invitation. Hope to see you soon?



The San Joaquin Gunslingers stopped by the 15th Annual Spring Home and Garden Festival held on Saturday, April 7 at the Senior Center, and had several shootouts throughout the day. No actual gunslingers were harmed in the course of their demonstrations.

## Starbucks with the Superintendent

First Week of the Month

GVUSD District Office Room 2

7:45 a.m. to 8:45 a.m.

Open agenda for parents and community members to ask questions and share ideas.

For more information contact Aimee Beintker at 645-7500.

Next Coffee May 3



**GOLDEN VALLEY**  
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# The "Rules" for Staying Safe

By Dave Johnson

I felt it is time to refresh you all with some basic tips for staying safe. When away from your home:

1. Be aware of your surroundings when you are out and about. Avoid doing things that distract you such as talking on your cell phone as you are approaching your car in a parking lot and listening to music with headphones when you run or take a walk.

2. Carry your keys in your hand when you walk from the building to your car. Don't wait until you get to your car and then search through your purse for them.

3. Always keep your car doors locked while you are driving. Lock them immediately when you get in the car.

4. Before you unlock your car and get out of it in a parking area, look around you. If you see someone or anything that looks suspicious, find another parking space.

5. In lines of traffic, stay far enough behind the car in front of you so

that you can fully see its rear tires at all times. This will give you plenty of space to veer into another lane if you have to.

6. Don't be nice. If a stranger approaches you and asks for help with his or her bags or wants directions, just say "no" and keep on walking. Don't worry about looking foolish or rude. This is a common ruse and exactly what has happened too many times to people who end up looking at the wrong end of a gun.

7. If you are approached for your purse or wallet, throw it in the direction of the attacker and run in the opposite direction while you scream loudly. This may save your life. They will instinctively go for the purse.

8. If you are carrying a lot of bags and are approached or physically grabbed. Drop the bags, start screaming and run.

9. Don't wear very loose clothing. It is easier to grab and pull off.

10. If someone is approaching you and you feel uncomfortable, look the person directly in the eye and say something like "Isn't this a nice day?" and keep on walking.

11. Be strong and confident in your voice and stride. Remember, they are looking for easy prey. Show your strength and confidence. Attackers don't want to be identified later. Look them straight in the eye. Don't smile. Let them know you will remember their face.

12. Carry pepper spray when you walk. Have it in your hand. It does you no good in your purse!

13. If you have a gun, know how to use it. Take handgun self-defense classes. Do not carry it concealed without the proper license. Know the law. A gun in your purse or nightstand is no good if you don't know how to use it.

14. If you are on an elevator alone and another person gets on, get off. No need to explain your actions to anyone. Attackers don't want a fight.

15. You have to react quickly and decisively in the face of an attack. Scream at the top of your lungs. Yell "No! Get Away!" Shout obscenities. Run as fast as

you can. Make a real scene. This accomplishes two things: It is an element of surprise for the attacker who wants a willing, passive victim, and yelling actually forces you to breathe. If you don't yell, you will hold your breath and get weak at a time when you need to be strong.

To protect yourself in your home:

1. Have a home invasion plan. You probably have a plan for escaping your home if there is a fire, but does your family have a plan if someone breaks in?

2. If someone breaks in, dial 911 immediately.

3. Keep your cell phone on your nightstand at night. If the phone lines have been compromised, you have a second line of communication within immediate reach.

4. Invest in the best locks, doors and alarm system for your home. This is not the place to scrimp and save money.

5. Never enter your home if the door is open and you know you closed it when you left. Leave and call

the police immediately.

6. Do not indicate the number of people in your family or that you are not at home on your answering machine or voice mail. Record a simple message in a male voice saying, "Thank you for calling. Please leave a message." Someone does not need to know that there are children in the home, that you live alone, or that you are on vacation.

7. Enroll in your local "self-defense school." Golden Valley Martial Arts will soon be launching an "adults only" (over 30) training program on Saturday mornings. SPACE IS LIMITED! Check the website calendar for details or call Master Johnson at 917-5262.

Your feedback is vital and appreciated. Remember, since we are all in this together, let's make it a community project, have some fun and increase our level of safety.

PARENTAL GUIDANCE: Spend some time with you your children reviewing the following sites:

[www.amw.com/kids](http://www.amw.com/kids), [tcs.cybertipline.com](http://tcs.cybertipline.com) and [www.missingkids.com/adccouncil](http://www.missingkids.com/adccouncil).

SELF-DEFENSE TIPS: If someone makes you feel uncomfortable, turn and look him or her in the eyes with confidence and say so. Protect your space. Always stand at a slanted angle with one foot back spaced at about shoulder width. Hands should be relaxed and held between waist and chest level. KNOW YOUR ENVIRONMENT.

Master Johnson is a world recognized security and self-defense expert specializing in executive protection, hand-to-hand, multiple opponents, and weapon disarms. He is listed in the "Who is Who" in Martial Arts and was named "Master Instructor of the Year" 1996 by the World Martial Arts Hall of Fame. He is the owner of Golden Valley Martial Arts, Tactical Training International, Dave Johnson Real Estate and operates the World's only online self-defense and Black Belt training course at [www.masterjohnson.com](http://www.masterjohnson.com). He can be contacted at [info@masterjohnson.com](mailto:info@masterjohnson.com).

**Be strong and confident in your voice and stride. Remember, they are looking for easy prey. Show your strength and confidence. Attackers don't want to be identified later. Look them straight in the eye. Don't smile. Let them know you will remember their face.**

**Don't be nice. If a stranger approaches you and asks for help with his or her bags or wants directions, just say "no" and keep on walking. Don't worry about looking foolish or rude. This is a common ruse and exactly what has happened too many times to people who end up looking at the wrong end of a gun.**

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4/07

## Ranchos Pee Wee Cheer Squad Places at Las Vegas Nationals

The cheerleaders for Ranchos Youth Football (RYF) not only cheer throughout the football season but many of them choose to go on to compete long after the football season ends. It is then that these young ladies of the RYF Cheer squad become very determined to succeed. That is when they enter their competition season and their hard work begins.

This tiny team of eight squad members – some of whom had never cheered before – comprised the Pee Wee Lady Hawks. These young ladies practiced three or four nights a week and occasionally even worked on their routines over the weekends. The team learned a 2 1/2 minute routine for both the cheer and dance competitions, and had to include several different styles of cheer moves and dance moves from jazz, cheer, funk and hip hop.

They competed in three events this year and their dedication, determination and practice really paid off. On Dec. 3 they competed at the Jamz Regionals at Magic Mountain and placed 1st in cheer and 2nd in pom/dance, qualifying them to compete in the Nationals

Competition in Las Vegas. From there they went to the U.S.A. Regionals in Tracy, Calif. and placed 1st for their pom/dance.

They began to work on perfecting their routine to compete at the Jamz National Competition in Las Vegas that was held on Feb. 11. This event was held over four days and there were over 500 teams and several divisions to conquer. This group of amazing young ladies rose to the occasion with true Ranchos spirit when they danced onto the stage and captured the 6th place trophy in their pom/dance division.

The Pee Wee Hawks team had members from both Sierra View and Webster Elementary. The team consisted of Alexis Schweikert, Emily McClure, Hayley Schulz, McKenzie Santoro, Morgan Lusk, Tiffany Herron, Katie Ragsdale and Justina Castillo.

They were coached by Stephani Yonan and Jordann Hartley who were both former RYF cheerleaders. Their advisors were Jodi Ragsdale, LeAnn Bauer and Danette Yonan.



*This event was held over four days and there were over 500 teams and several divisions to conquer. This group of amazing young ladies rose to the occasion with true Ranchos spirit when they danced onto the stage and captured the 6th place trophy.*



### LETTERS cont. from P. 5

them on their property at one time or another. The problem arose when one elderly woman decided that this activity, nearly a quarter mile from her home, was intolerable for an hour on a Saturday afternoon. She called the Sheriff who pursued these diminutive criminals and their father with gusto, threatening them with citations should this heinous activity continue. Naturally, the children are heart broken and all the other neighbors have been informed that they, too, are facing legal action if they continue to ride their ATVs on their own property, causing this woman to become the enemy of nearly the entire neighborhood.

Being one of the few who does not own an ATV, although my wife and I have Harley Davidson street bikes, I am not directly affected by this woman's selfishness, but I would just like to say that in my humble opinion, anyone who can't put up with an hour's annoyance on a Saturday afternoon so a family can have a little fun together is a poor excuse for a neighbor, and an even poorer excuse for a human being. I'm 58 years old and I still remember what it was like to have fun as a child. I find it sad that some have become so jaded and self-absorbed that the things that delighted them in their own childhood, to the possible annoyance of others, are forgotten.

C.L. Cake.  
Madera Ranchos

Dear Editor:

I suspect that you monitor the sheriff's reports regarding criminal

acts in the community. I want to inform you that Golden Valley Baptist Church was vandalized last week, sometime after 5 p.m. on Friday April 6 and 10 a.m. Saturday morning.

Someone threw a plastic pipe fitting through the front door and shattered the door glass. Officer J. Thomas took a report from me on the issue, so it is a matter of record. Damage estimate is \$200.

As the Church Administrator, our official position on this is that the church has been part of the Ranchos for 28 years and is here to be a benefit and blessing to the community. We have made the church grounds available to whoever has wanted to use them. It is not uncommon to find kids hanging out there or skateboarders, skaters and bicycles in the parking lot, which has also been used as overflow parking by the neighbors, even driving lessons. Ironically, we have also offered the church for use by the Victim Offender Reconciliation Program, providing a meeting place for victims and offenders to meet in a non-judicial venue. We offer the church for the benefit of the community because the grounds and buildings belong to the Lord Jesus Christ, who compels us to demonstrate the love and compassion of God. Hate is easy, Love is hard; We choose to do what's hard.

Thank you.

Stewart Hough  
Church Administrator, Deacon  
Golden Valley Baptist Church  
Madera Ranchos



STOCK cont. from P. 7

and away from the hazards of the roads on graduation night. The Committee needs prizes or money from the community to help make this a night to remember for the graduates. You can make your check payable to:

- Liberty High, Class of 2007
- Sober Graduation Event
- 12220 Road 36
- Madera, Ca 93636

Or if you have gifts to contribute call Kathleen Gorman at 559-645-0262.

All contributions are tax deductible. The Sober Grad Committee will be grateful for your help. Oh by the way, did I mention that the theme this year is "double-0-seven"?

Coming up in May is the Day of the Teacher. Actually it is celebrated for the week of May 6-12. Do you remember a special teacher who made a difference in

your life? If you do, can you send them a card to say thank you?

Mother's Day is coming up on May 13. If you are fortunate enough to have a living mother, count you blessings.

This school year is quickly coming to a close. Sierra View Elementary will have their annual Carnival on May 5 from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. Sierra View Elementary will have their Open House on May 17 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Ranchos Middle School had their Open House on April 18th and it included a Book Fair.

If you are wondering about other school dates, check out the district website at www.gvusd.k12.ca.us and click on news and events for the district-wide calendar.

The next school board meeting will be held at Liberty High School on May 8 at 6 p.m. in the library. Lots of things are going on. Come and hear all about them.

SAM cont. from P. 5

we want to see the continued inefficient use of land? Do we want the construction of mindless small subdivisions that continue to add to problems rather than help solve them - communities that place a continued drain on county resources?

Unfortunately, the deck is stacked in favor of "business as usual." More often than not, smaller subdivisions avoid the scrutiny that larger projects are faced with. Many new small housing projects throughout the Central Valley are approved without the burden of preparing Environmental Impact Reports. Smaller projects are not criticized for creating "significant impacts."

Smaller housing projects are not expected to provide for new jobs. Most smaller housing projects are not expected to provide significant parks or open space (most of the time they simply pay a "fee" for the construction of parks somewhere else). Smaller projects are often approved with the development of individual water wells or connecting to existing community water systems (even though the groundwater may be declining, or the community water systems may be inadequate). Recent state law requires

**No new jobs, no new water, no new parks, and no contribution to roads or road maintenance. No new fire stations, no new schools and no new sheriff's deputies. No real choice in new housing types.**

projects larger than 500 units to demonstrate a long term reliable water supply as a condition of approval; smaller projects avoid this burden. Many small projects within Madera County are still developed using septic systems to dispose of wastewater (even though this practice contributes to the degradation of groundwater). Most small projects are not criticized for "converting agricultural lands," even though they are developed on former farmland. Smaller projects do not typically provide for different housing types and sizes. They are "one size fits all."

Up until Madera County recently passed its "Capital Facilities Impact Fee," most small housing projects have avoided contributing anything to the future provision of new fire stations, police stations or libraries. Little or no money is contributed by small housing projects to the improvement or maintenance of roadways. Smaller housing projects get away with paying "statutory" school fees, even though these fees are mostly insufficient to provide for new schools.

The fact is, smaller housing proj-

ects do not attract the attention of the individuals and organizations that routinely hound larger, better planned communities.

When I look at the misery that the Rio Mesa, Gunner Ranch and Gateway Village projects have gone through, it sickens me. Gunner Ranch and Rio Mesa were originally approved in 1995. Since that time, not one single new housing unit has been built in either of those projects! Gateway Village is still seeking approvals after more than 10 years of county processing.


During this time (10 to 12 years), Madera County's population has grown by more than 30,000! That is, conservatively, 6,000 new housing units worth of "business as usual"! No new jobs, no new water, no new parks, and no contribution to roads or road maintenance. No new fire stations, no new schools and no new sheriff's deputies. No real choice in new housing types.

I know that these new projects are not "perfect." I also know that each of these projects has gone through the highest level of public scrutiny: each has had to prepare an Environmental Impact Report, and, subsequently, will be obliged to answer several tough questions. Each is a self contained and self-sustaining master planned commu-

nity. Unlike "business as usual" small housing projects, each of these projects will have to provide for resources and services at no expense to the county. Each is required to provide a mix of residential housing opportunities. Each is required to provide a balance of jobs and new dwelling units. Each is required to provide for parks and open space. Each will provide reliable water supplies. Each will provide state of the art wastewater treatment facilities. Each will be required to provide for fire protection and police services. Each will be required to pay higher than state required school impact fees for the provision of new community schools. Each will contribute enormous amounts to new roadways and road maintenance.

This is the conundrum. While we have been spending time criticizing these responsibly planned new communities, more than 30,000 new citizens of Madera county have moved into "business as usual" small housing projects.

I hope we wake up before another 30,000 more people call Madera County their home.

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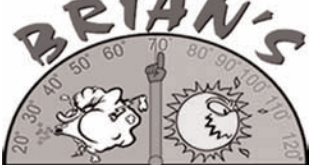
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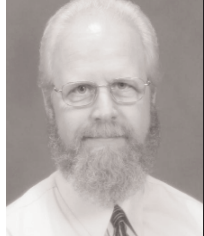


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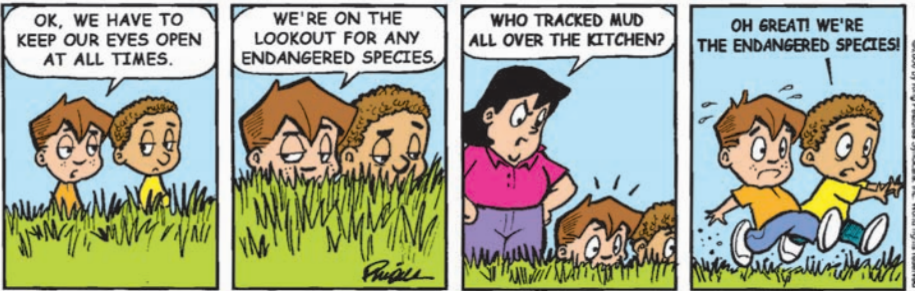
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Amber Waves

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R.F.D.

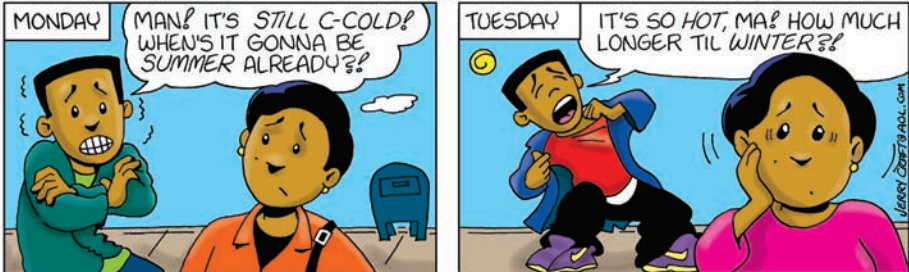
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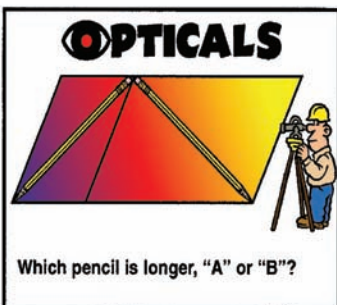
The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



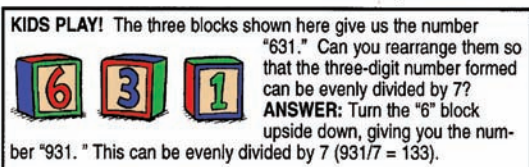
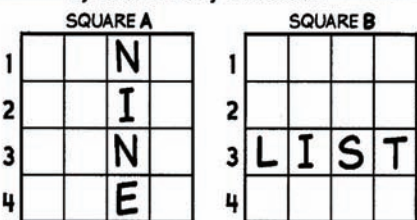
HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF



Junior Whirl

by Charles Barry Townsend



Let's make two "Magic Word Squares"! Listed below are the sixteen words you'll be able to read, left-to-right, top-to-bottom, when you've correctly filled in the squares. We've already filled in two of these words. The rest is up to you. Solve the puzzle using trial and error.

- AMID EATS MATS
- AMIR EDGY NEST
- AREA LANE NINE
- ARIA LAST SING
- BALM LIST TREY
- BANE

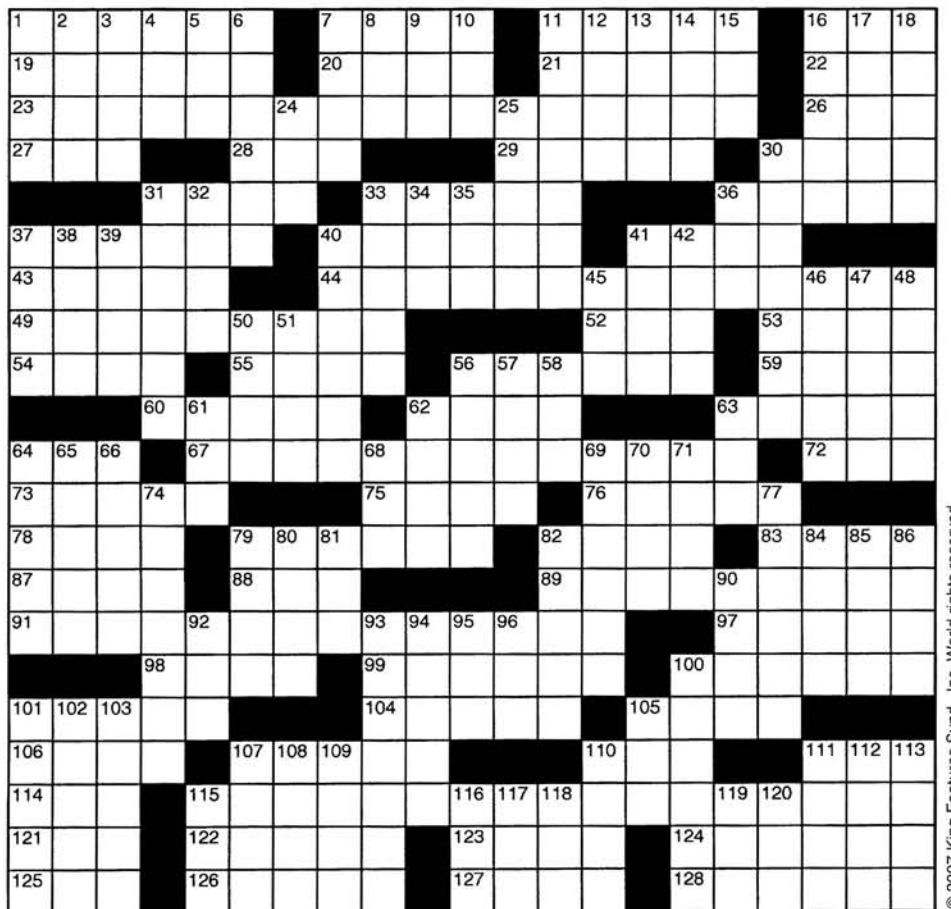
LINK-UPS! Here's a list of 12, one-syllable words, divided into two columns. Turn them into six longer words by linking them together. To do this, draw a line from one word in the left column to one word in the right.

- 1. ASP/EYED
- 2. GRIM/RATE
- 3. NIT/ACES
- 4. PANE/ANT
- 5. LACK/LED
- 6. RAMP/HALT

Answers: Asphalt, grinnaces, nitrate, paneled, lackeyed, rampant.

Super Crossword

- ACROSS**
- 1 Tumult
  - 7 Singer
  - 11 Dottie
  - 16 Ignominy
  - 19 Hydrotherapy site
  - 20 Disquiet
  - 21 "Nabucco" number
  - 22 Bile
  - 22 producer
  - 22 Son of Noah
  - 23 '79 Judy Davis film
  - 26 Literary collection
  - 27 Bit of butter
  - 28 LummoX
  - 29 Forestall
  - 30 Surprise test
  - 31 Funnyman
  - 33 Feta
  - 36 Light weight
  - 37 Telescope view
  - 40 Donahue of "Get a Life"
  - 41 Besh or Andersson
  - 43 Came around
  - 44 '31 Marx Brothers movie
  - 49 Toody and Muldoon
  - 52 Monte Rosa, e.g.
  - 53 Machu Picchu native
  - 54 Vivacity
  - 55 "My Sweet" ('70 smash)
  - 56 With enthusiasm
  - 59 "The Subject Was Roses" star
  - 60 Norwegian composer
  - 62 Bridge
  - 63 Conductor's term
  - 64 Mini, to MacTavish
  - 67 Kirk's command
  - 72 Itch
  - 73 Explorer
  - 75 Elwes or Grant
  - 76 Dodge
  - 78 Spirited steed
  - 79 Attempt
  - 82 Obstacle
  - 83 Salt serving
  - 87 Mediterranean port
  - 88 Skater
  - 89 Babilonia
  - 89 Sciorra of "Jungle Fever"
  - 91 "Double, double" ("Macbeth" refrain)
  - 97 Heavenly hunter
  - 98 "Dies" character
  - 99 Jim Varney character
  - 100 Had a knight job?
  - 101 Clear the slate
  - 104 Dutch export
  - 105 Take-out order?
  - 106 Pull sharply
  - 107 Valhalla VIP
  - 110 Calendar
  - 111 "Wiedersehen"
  - 114 Goal
  - 115 Peter Graves series
  - 121 Middling mark
  - 122 Comic
  - 123 Hodgepodge
  - 124 Verdi hero
  - 125 Hamilton bill
  - 126 Effluvia
  - 127 Wording
  - 128 Basket material
  - 6 Tune
  - 7 Street urchin
  - 8 History division
  - 9 Offense
  - 10 Make lace
  - 11 Bondage
  - 12 Take on board
  - 13 Maintain
  - 14 Competition
  - 15 Drop a brick
  - 16 Rocker
  - 17 Lose control
  - 18 Stun
  - 24 Housman's "A Shropshire"
  - 25 Lake sight
  - 30 Malaria treatment
  - 31 Leaves work?
  - 32 Small businessman?
  - 33 Fair
  - 34 Tin Tin
  - 35 Cephalopod's squirt
  - 36 Kimono closer
  - 37 Rubberneck
  - 38 Way off base?
  - 39 "Damn Yankees" siren
  - 40 Materialize
  - 41 Vatican document
  - 42 Culp/Cosby
  - series
  - 45 Spoiled
  - 46 Foe
  - 47 Word form for "view"
  - 48 Upscale shop
  - 50 "Coming" ('69 song)
  - 51 Berg and Drabowsky
  - 56 Put on guard
  - 57 Be different
  - 58 Rapscallion
  - 61 Furrow
  - 62 Firmament feature
  - 63 Rocker
  - 64 Nugent
  - 64 Barely there
  - 65 "Tosca" tenor
  - 66 Problem solvers?
  - 68 Sgt. or cpl.
  - 69 Cheese-maker's need
  - 70 A Karamazov brother
  - 71 It's a long story
  - 74 Cleopatra's Needle, for one
  - 77 Swimmer Gertrude
  - 79 Empedocles' last stand?
  - 80 Lose luster
  - 81 Robust
  - 82 Taco topping
  - 84 Landed
  - 85 Gin
  - 86 Round of applause
  - 90 Cook in a cauldron
  - 92 Exist
  - 93 Gets back
  - 94 Maine town
  - 95 Burmese statesman
  - 96 You can retire on it
  - 100 More nervous
  - 101 Tape-deck button
  - 102 Actress
  - 103 "As You Like It" setting
  - 105 Couple
  - 107 Unrestrained
  - 108 '52 Winter Olympics site
  - 109 Tyrant
  - 110 Detect
  - 111 Blind as
  - 112 RADIUS' sidekick?
  - 113 Sinn
  - 115 Hua's predecessor
  - 116 "I kid you"
  - 117 du
  - 118 Combine
  - 119 Mexican Mrs.
  - 120 Part of UPI



TRIVIA TEST By Fifi Rodriguez

- MOVIES: Who won the Best Actor Academy Award for his role in "Forrest Gump"?
- TELEVISION: On what show did the Coneheads get their start?
- FOOD & DRINK: What is a cauliflower's true origin?
- ANIMAL KINGDOM: What type of creature is a bandicoot?
- GEOGRAPHY: On which continent is the country of Gabon located?
- ENTERTAINERS: Which entertainer's real name was Muziyad Yakhoob?
- GEOLOGY: What is the chief ore in aluminum?
- TECHNOLOGY: What does a baud measure?
- MEDICINE: Who discovered that yellow fever was carried by mosquitoes?
- GENERAL KNOWLEDGE: On which river is Victoria Falls located?

Answers

MAGIC MAZE MOST USED WORDS IN COUNTRY AND WESTERN SONG TITLES



- Find the listed words in the diagram. They run in all directions - forward, backward, up, down and diagonally.
- Blues
  - Country
  - Crazy
  - Don't
  - Life
  - Little
  - Lonesome
  - Love
  - Man
  - Mountain
  - Never
  - Night
  - Roses
  - Woman
  - Your

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