

The Ranchos Independent

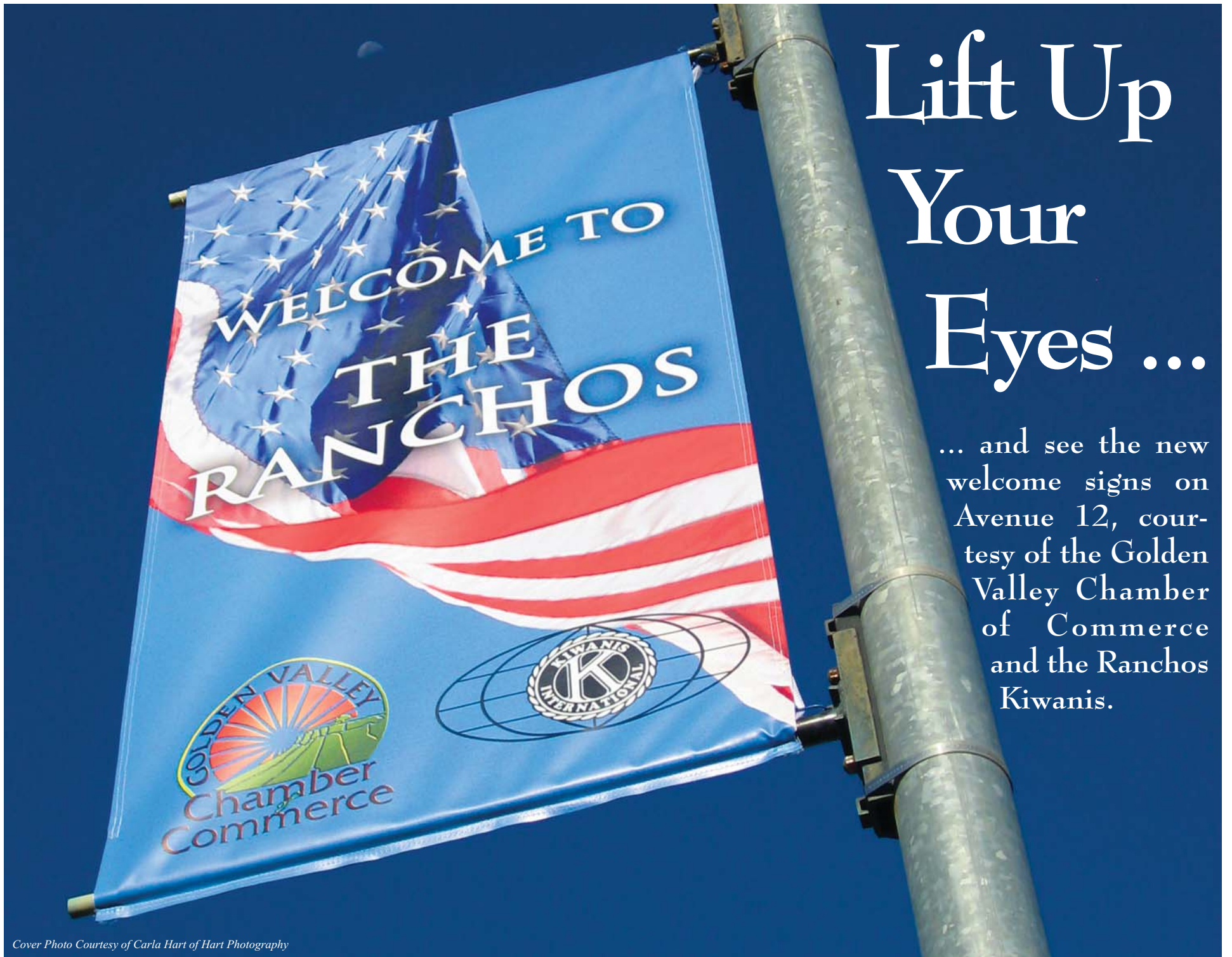


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August 2008

The Official Publication of Southeastern Madera County

50¢



Lift Up Your Eyes ...

... and see the new welcome signs on Avenue 12, courtesy of the Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce and the Ranchos Kiwanis.

Cover Photo Courtesy of Carla Hart of Hart Photography

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Enforcing Codes in the Ranchos

By Christi McKinney

Madera County Code Enforcement officers have been busy at work this summer investigating a variety of code violations in the Madera Ranchos. At the top of the list of complaints reported by residents is the proliferation of signs. Real estate signs are a frequent sight as are yard sale signs that seem to stay posted forever.

Eric Yancy, Madera County Code Enforcement officer, explains that signs are allowed only on private property, not on street corners pointing to an event down the street.

Signs have also been an issue recently with businesses on Avenue 12. Pedestrians are sometimes forced to walk in the busy street because business signs and landscaping blocks the area next to the street.

Madera County actually owns easements on both sides of Avenue 12 which prohibits signs or anything else blocking the area closest to the street. Businesses have been very cooperative in resolving this issue.

The presence of inoperative or abandoned vehicles is another frequent complaint. In addition to being a blight, they can reduce property values and create a variety of safety hazards. Vehicles must be registered and be operable or they must be stored behind an 8-foot fence or enclosed in a garage or other building.

Yancy recalls a recent case in the Coarsegold area where Madera County Code Enforcement worked with a homeowner to remove over 50 junk cars from his property. The cars had begun as projects that got out of control after being accumulated over a number of years. The cars were towed out, approximately eight a day until the problem was resolved. This was done by the county at no cost to the homeowner or to the county. This was made possible by the Abandoned Vehicle Service Authority that bills all California car owners \$1 on their vehicle registration to combat this increasing problem.

Vacant Properties being left in disrepair is another problem that has gotten increasingly worse with the current rate of foreclosures. In July, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signed California Civil Code 2929.3. This bill requires owners of vacant residential property purchased at foreclosure or acquired through foreclosure under a mortgage or deed of trust to maintain

the property or face fines of up to \$1,000 per day. "Failure to maintain" includes failing to care for the exterior of the property, permitting excessive foliage growth that diminishes the value of the surrounding properties, failing to take action to prevent trespassers or squatters from remaining on the property, or failing to take action to prevent mosquito larvae from growing in standing water, as

well as a number of other conditions that create a public nuisance.

This means that resident property owners can choose to let the lawn die and the weeds grow or choose not to repair a broken window, however if a

property is vacant as the result of a foreclosure purchase, the bank or owner of the property can face huge fines for doing the very same thing.

Other Common Complaints

Occupied RVs – Living in an RV is prohibited unless you have a land use permit to do so. If there is any question as to the classification or use of your land you should contact the zoning administrator.

Farm Animals – Any farm animals including chickens, ducks and goats are not necessarily permitted on single family home properties. This varies within the Ranchos are so you'll want to be familiar with any restrictions on your property

"If you receive a notice from Code Enforcement, it's very important that you contact us right away and not ignore the situation hoping it will go away," Yancy said, acknowledging that it's seldom pleasant to receive a notice from Code Enforcement. "We understand that things happen and we will do our best to work with you on the situation"

Code Enforcement was recently asked to participate in a revitalization project with the town of Fairmead. They helped to rehabilitate a number of buildings and removed nearly 50 abandoned vehicles in the community.

The Code Enforcement Agency responds to citizen complaints and with three people they are not staffed sufficiently to be proactive in enforcing code violations. Complaints can be filed by calling the county of Madera at 559-675-7821. Complaints must include your name, address and phone number and cannot be made anonymously; however your identity and personal information is protected and not available to anyone.



County Moves Forward with Bypass

By Randy Bailey

After holding several meetings over several months on the subject of alternatives to the present configuration of Avenue 12 due to projected increased traffic, at the Aug. 27 meeting held at the Ranchos/Hills Senior Center Madera County District 1 Supervisor Frank Bigelow stated that it had become clear to him that he had heard enough voices from the community to convince him to move forward with the implementation of an Avenue 12 bypass of the Ranchos.

"We need to be proactive, prepare now before things get out of hand and become too expensive," Bigelow said.

The concern for Avenue 12 came after studies done by Madera County Staff determined that traffic was increasing and that conditions along Avenue 12 were becoming more and more dangerous. In addition, new developments planned for the future would also increase traffic and it was apparent something needed to be done.

Madera County Staff recommended the change in designation of Avenue 12 to an "expressway" in order for it to be able to handle present and future traffic. That designation allowed the County to authorize up to six lanes on Avenue 12 from Highway 41 to Highway 99. Excluded from that designa-

Please see **BYPASS** on P. 12

Suspected Ranchos Tagger Caught

A tagging game carried out in the Madera Ranchos and plaguing business owners in and around the Maywood Center at Maywood and Avenue 12 for the past month is over. Deputy Patrick Davis is being credited for closing at least three felony vandalism cases with the arrest of a 14-year old boy today.

The teenager, whose name cannot be released because of his age, was taken into custody on the morning of Aug. 22 after a month-long investigation carried out by the Madera County Sheriff's Department. According to reports, businesses in and around the May-

wood Center were getting plastered with spray paint graffiti – "tagged" – resulting in a costly clean-up.

Sheriff John Anderson praised Deputy Davis for clearing this case and added that tips from the public most certainly aided in the young man's apprehension. "Anyone who has information on crimes or suspicious activity should never hesitate to call our department," Anderson said. "This is a prime case where the public has helped us make an arrest."

Meantime, the juvenile remains behind bars at Juvenile Hall facing felony vandalism charges.



Editorial

Thank You, Supervisor Bigelow

By Randy Bailey

Three cheers to Madera County District 1 Supervisor Frank Bigelow. What a refreshing change of pace to have a leader actually lead. After one town hall meeting after another here in the Ranchos in an attempt to get the word out that changes were a'comin' to Avenue 12, Supervisor Bigelow saw the writing on the wall and acted.

Hallelujah!
Just to bring you up to speed, Madera County has determined that Avenue 12 has become more and more dangerous from increased traffic and that planned new developments will only increase the traffic impact on Avenue 12 in the future. Something needs to be done.

Avenue 12 had its designation changed to an "expressway" by the County, allowing up to six lanes to be built on Avenue 12 from Highway 41 to Highway 99 (can you imagine six lanes down the center of the Ranchos?) and the designation applied to every part of Avenue 12 EXCEPT a 3-mile stretch from approximately Road 39½ to Road 36 that the County wasn't going to do anything about until it heard from Ranchos residents. And what they were waiting to hear was if four to six lanes sounded like a good choice or if the possibility of a bypass to direct the fast moving,

no intention of stopping, "I gotta get from point A to point B" commuters around the Ranchos wasn't a better choice.

At meeting after meeting residents stood up and talked about how dangerous it was to try to back out onto Avenue 12 right now, let alone when up to four additional lanes would be added. People talked about what multiple lanes would do to mail delivery and trash collection. And there was the concern for kids walking home from school down Avenue 12 with no sidewalks into the face of an increased flow of traffic.

The one thing that was NEVER raised by anyone in the audience at any of the meetings was a preference for the multiple lanes down the middle of town. In an attempt to be fair, the County kept bringing up the alternative to a bypass in the form of either four or six lanes down Avenue 12, and they kept stressing that a bypass was only a suggestion, but the reality was that if there was support for increasing the lanes down Avenue 12, it was the best kept secret at every meeting held.

Finally, by the August 20 meeting, the natives were starting to get restless.

"Why are we coming to these meetings to hear the same thing?"

"Why don't we vote on it right now?"

"Is there ANYONE in this room that wants six lanes???"

By the August 27 meeting, the good folks of the Ranchos had just about had enough.

"Why do we have to keep coming to these meetings to hear the same things over and over?"

"Does anyone know ANYONE who wants six lanes down Avenue 12?"

And with that Supervisor Bigelow had heard enough. The purpose of the meetings was to get a feel for the thoughts of the Ranchos Community and he did. In spades.

Keep up the good work, Supervisor Bigelow. Oh, and see if you can get that \$3.2 million the "city" Supervisors took from us. That should just about cover an Avenue 12 beautification project.

The Ranchos Independent

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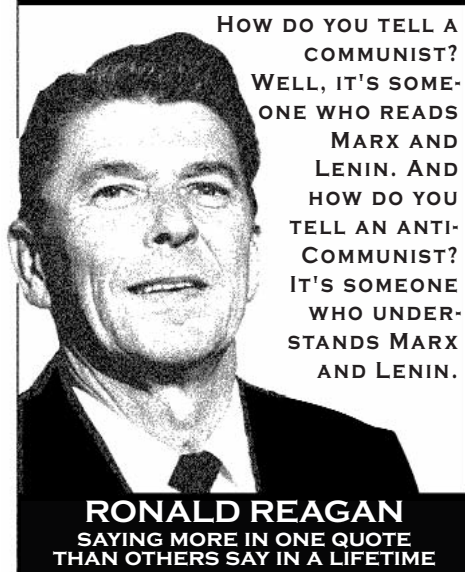
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Letters

Dear Editor:

Most of us in the Madera and Bonadelle Ranchos depend upon ground water for our homes and property to survive. Without it this area would soon become a ghost town, a nice one, but still a ghost town open to vandalism and looting. Property values would turn into dust. As you travel around these areas you will notice water well drilling trucks in a lot of areas, mostly the older ones. The older wells were drilled to the depth of the aquifer at that time, but now some of these are inadequate because of the aquifers' descending depths. Blaming it on someone or something won't fix it, but if I were to blame it on something it would be overdevelopment, but that is not a cure, but maybe pushing it far into the future may help us now.

I researched the following statistics through phone calls to professionals and conversations with property owners in the area. Most older wells were drilled to about 300 feet and have a 5- or 6-inch casing that prohibits drilling them any deeper. They are called "throw away wells" in the drilling industry. Today's wells in this area are being drilled to 400 feet or deeper. I know of two recently drilled. One south of Ave. 15 on Rd. 35 1/2 that was drilled to 380 feet and did not hit a static water level until 260 feet, the other was a new well on an existing residence that was drilled to 500 feet off of Rd. 36 and Ave. 14. If the well in question has an 8-inch casing it can be drilled deeper, but this would have to be drilled as an Ag well to start with. You have two choices: one; have your pump lowered deeper, depth permitting; or two, drill a new well at a cost of \$10,000 or more. One is more cost attractive. Have your pump dropped down deeper and that will

have a cost of about \$275 initially plus \$75 for each additional joint (21 feet each) of pipe. If you are interested, the original drilling company will have the information regarding your well's depth as well as your pump depth to let you know how much deeper your pump can be dropped.

The reason I am disseminating this information is that there is a "Mitigated Negative Declaration" (MND #2004-41) before the Madera County Planning Commission put forth by developer Ronald R. Samuelson to develop the 400 acres west of where Avenues 14, 14-1/2, John Albert and Bonadelle all dead end. He would like to extend these streets into this development. We who live on these streets enjoy the peace and quiet of these streets, which also have a built-in security value – one way in and one way out. The only traffic we see are the people that belong here; garbage trucks, mail delivery, etc., and the people who can't or don't read the "Not a Through Road" signs at the beginning of these streets. This development can only mean one thing: more wells, drawing from our already descending water table at a more rapid rate, more traffic and pollution!

There will be a Public Hearing of this project proposal at the Resource Management Agency Building at 2037 W. Cleveland Ave. in Madera (the old J. C. Penny's building) on Tuesday, Sept. 16, 2008, at 6 p.m. The county only sends the Notice of Public Hearing to the homes (eight total) that are within 300 feet of the proposed property development. Please attend if you are concerned.

Larry Turner
Madera Ranchos

Please see **LETTERS** on P. 18



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Allyson Robison, owner, is a digital marketing consultant with more than seven years experience in e-marketing. She grew up in the Ranchos and has moved back to raised her family here.

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THE D.O.G. HOUSE

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D.O.G. Report Meltdown

Epiphany: In my opinion, the budget hearing on Aug. 21 was a disaster. I got very little sleep that night thinking about what happened. I do believe, I had an epiphany at 4:20 a.m.

This is probably going to be a very long and at times rambling D.O.G. Report. Hopefully by the end of it, my wife and I will have decided if it is to be my last one.

My part in the Aug. 21 disaster was letting it get to me. I completely lost it. I looked like a raving lunatic.

What should have been two to four hours of thoughtful questions and open debate about legitimate budget issues became a list of the issues and what sounded like 30 minutes of frustrated accusations.

Stell Manfredi responded in kind and – for him – in a very uncharacteristic way. What happened didn't help the budget and didn't help the process, but it sure helped me understand! Like when I learned not to stand too close to the monkey cage.

I like and respect Stell and each one of the staff sitting at the table with him, but no one elected any of them King of Madera. Every decision they make is subject to the citizens' review and scrutiny and I don't think they have a problem with that concept. I have asked all of them questions at one time or another and in each instance they took the time to answer and explain how they came up with what it was that I did not understand.

The Budget Process - The Budget process is a scam!

First off, government is supposed to be an open and democratic process, this one is not. The Chief Accounting Officer and his staff negotiate and come up with the department heads. If you will look at the past year's Board meetings you will see there is little or no Board direction on the budget or anything in it. On the surface the process is a big marble game. The County has about 200 million marbles and every department has a bucket they want filled with marbles. Each department submits a budget laying out what they "need." The CAO distributes the limited number of marbles in a way he feels is the fairest and best for the County. Then the plan is to take what Stell has done and do a thorough review at the public hearings.

Three days of budget hearings - Hearing is defined by Encarta as: "A chance to be heard, an opportunity to be heard, especially a chance to state an opinion or fact." Encarta's example of a sentence using it is: "All I want is for my views to get a fair hearing." Ironic isn't it?

Day one is called the presentation of the budget. What it is in fact is the CAO going from cover to cover giving the Reader's Digest version of the County's budget.

At the beginning and several times during the presentation, Stell invited questions as he made the presentation, but the Chair would have none of that. Wheeler tried many times to get explanations as the presentation was made but was gavelled down by the Chair each time. I was told from the beginning – as was Supervisor Wheeler – that Thursday we would have an opportunity to speak and ask questions.

Several times Stell attempted to actually present more facts and figures as he went along but was essentially told to shut up and get on with it. One supervisor even chimed in, "At this rate we will be done by Christmas!"

I was having a hard time understanding what the rush was all about. For some reason, three days of budget hearings had become:

1. Day One – The Presentation: Needed to get through it in a hurry and quit early so the supervisors could get to some work they had on their desks.
2. Day Two: Began at 1:30 p.m. rather than at 9 a.m. and began with the Chair announcing, "We will be done today!"

From three days of hearings that we were promised, somehow we got quitting early on the first day, less than half of a day on the second, and cancellation of the third.

I was disappointed to see that Wheeler was in court and not at the hearings on Thursday. I was even more disappointed when he finally got there and didn't ask any of the tough questions he had tried so hard to get in on Wednesday.

The Budget - The budget is arguably the most important document that is acted upon by the Board in a given year. The budget will determine the possibility of success or failure of each segment or program in our government. Until early Friday

Please see **D.O.G.** on P. 13

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Ranchos Family Never "Tires" of Family Business

Nearly 20 years ago the Petty family moved to the Madera Ranchos community where they have grown both business and family while supporting our local economy. Rick and Susan Petty simply thought when they first moved to the Ranchos that they had found a nice safe place to raise their children, Dotsie and Bubba. That thought appeared to have been well founded because both children would become successful students at Webster Elementary, Madera High School and even completing some courses at Madera Center that have helped them both to complete their Registered Nursing degrees.

Whether it's a quick trip to the Ranchos Market for milk and eggs, a flat of flowers from the nursery, the mid-project part from the hardware, or gas for all of the family vehicles, the Pettys keep business local. Even though their own business, Blackstone Tire and Service, is in Fresno, the Petty family keeps contributing to the local Madera economy where they have built many working relationships with not only families and neighbors, but local merchants as well. Rick and Susan believe it's important to support not only the belief of the family but the concept of community as well. In a time when the economy is just starting to force many people to forego the daily trips to Fresno for the necessities of life, the Pettys have been firmly supporting the local economy for years.

Since 1989 Rick and Susan have been owners of Blackstone Tire and Service and they are proud to be part of a family owned and operated business with such an outstanding reputation for service. In order to continue to serve the local community of Madera, they even offer pick up and delivery of vehicles to and from the Ranchos community on a pre-arranged, appointment basis. For their neighbors, friend and local merchants, they strive to make car repair as easy as picking up the phone and dialing 559-224-7414. One thing both Rick and Susan are certain of is that you won't be disappointed with their service, because at Blackstone Tire, it's not just a business, it's a family affair!

Financial Stability = Marriage Stability

By Karl Roth

According to a Time Magazine survey, the #1 source of arguments in marriage is conflict over money. Gallup reports 56 percent of divorces are due to financial problems and pressures. During these financial days the pressures of finances seem especially intense. What can we do about it? What can we begin doing that will bring better financial stability in the future?

If you listen to most preachers they will tell that if you simply "give money to the Lord" (i.e. the church) all your money problems will be taken care of. That simply is not true. It's not the whole truth of God's financial counsel in the Bible. Generous giving is part of God's financial plan for us, but it's only one of God's five financial principles for financial stability. You can't do only one and expect all your financial worries to work out. You have to practice all five principles if you want the financial help and benefits God promises. Shellie and I have practiced these five financial principles since the day we were married. God has continued to bless us. We at Flipside want to help you handle these turbulent financial times according to the wisdom God's given us in the Bible.

Principle #1 - Accounting. This means I must keep good records. Proverbs 27:23-24 tells us "Riches can disappear fast. And the king's crown doesn't stay in his family forever – so watch your business interests closely. Know the state of your flocks and your herds." (NLT). He's saying to people in an agricultural environment: know your business interests well. We must know where our money is going. The first rule of success in money management is face the facts. Ignorance regarding your finances can get you in a lot of trouble. Ignorance plus easy credit equals a catastrophe. There are four things you need to know:

1. You ought to know what you own.
2. You need to know what you owe.
3. You need to know what you earned.

4. You need to know where it goes. Your expenditures.

Principle #2 - Budgeting. This means I must plan my spending. Proverbs 21:5 "The plans of the diligent lead to profit as surely as haste leads to poverty." Haste leads to poverty. You've got to plan your spending and set some financial goals. The average debt in the United States per capita is now over \$7,000. Why? We spend hastily. Most are guilty of a common phenomenon known as impulse buying: "I see it and I want it now," even if I've got to pay for it the rest of my life. The easiest thing to do in the world is to go into debt. Proverbs 21:20 "The wise man saves for the future, but the foolish man spends whatever he gets." (LB). The only way to get out of the debt cycle is with a budget. A budget is planned spending. The Bible says that the person who plans ends up in prosperity. A budget allows you to tell your money where you want it to go rather than wondering where your money went.

Principle #3 - Appreciation. This means I must enjoy what I already have. Proverbs 15:6-7. "Better is a little with the fear of the Lord than great wealth with turmoil." To have a little with the fear of the Lord is to learn to live with an attitude of gratitude. To not get worked up with what you don't have; to struggle after more and more rather than appreciating what is already in hand. This principle is violated when you want too much, too fast. When you get overextended financially and then get under pressure you've forfeited your ability to live with appreciation and gratitude. When you forget to live with an attitude of gratitude soon your home life begins to deteriorate. Money pressures affect every other area of life. 1 Timothy 6:6-8 "But Godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world and it is certain we can carry nothing out and therefore having food and raiment

Please see PASTOR on P. 12

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Ave 12

8/08

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9/11 Car Cruise Coming to Ranchos

For the first time ever, a car cruise-in in memory of 9/11 is coming to the Madera Ranchos and is being designed to benefit our troops in Iraq and Afghanistan through the *Word From Home Project*, a local project comprised of concerned citizens that sends free packages to our troops in both Iraq and Afghanistan.

Mark your calendar so you don't miss this event Saturday, Sept. 13 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Madera Ranchos Café on Avenue 12 in the



Maywood Center. For more information you can contact Pam Hansen at either 645-0513 or 474-2330. She can also be reached by e-mail at hansenrt66@aol.com.

You can also contact Pam if you'd be interested in sending a *Word From Home* package to a soldier or if you want to do-

nate funds for postage and/or gift items. Items that are in most demand by our troops are:

Snack Foods: Powdered drinks, protein snacks, dried fruit/nuts, candy.

Entertainment Items: DVDs, CDs, toys, games.

Health/Comfort: Baby wipes, socks, medicated powder, deodorant.

Miscellaneous: AA batteries, disposable cameras, telephone calling cards.

The *Word From Home Project* is a ministry project of the Madera Ranchos Assembly of God Church located at 35849 Avenue 13 1/2, Madera, CA 93636. The church may be reached at 645-0716 or you may visit their Website at www.maderaranchosag.com.



KIWANIS KORNER



This month our club had the honor of presenting two Community Service Awards at the Firefighter's Dinner on Saturday, Aug. 17. These awards went to community members or businesses who have contributed a great deal to their neighborhood through donating their time, resources and capital in helping to make our area a better place to live. This year, Charles Diaz Trucking, Inc. was chosen, as was Debbie Farr.

The Diaz Family has given graciously through their business and has single-handedly started a new venture in our area through the Electronic Recycling Program, with the proceeds going right back to the Ranchos Community. Not only does this raise funds for our area, but it is also good for our environment. Look for the green recycling truck at the Ranchos Market again in the fall and spring.

Debbie Farr was our other award winner. She is a powerhouse woman and can accomplish anything to which she puts her mind. She has a sociability that allows her to create great things, as she has taken a successful Firefighter's Dinner event and made it spectacular! She is very creative and extremely dedicated to our community and its needs. She is dearly loved by every one of the firefighters and the people around her. In a life that is busy for all of us, it is nice to take a moment to thank these people for all of their efforts in helping our community.

Now let's talk about what the Kiwanis is all about. The Kiwanis Club of the Ranchos is a service club collectively united by local community members looking to volunteer their time and resources to enhance the lives of children in their local community and worldwide. We help sponsor many service projects throughout the world, but we pay special attention to our local community schools and children by holding fund raisers and sponsoring, or co-sponsoring, events that help children here in the Madera Ranchos.

The Kiwanis Club of the Ranchos would like to remind everyone that one of the projects slated for the near future is the Ranchos Run at Liberty High on Saturday, Sept. 13. The funds raised from this event go toward our local Fire Departments, Station 9 and 19. Come out and run in the race or, if a slower pace is more your style, we have a 2 mile walk. Just come out and join us.

If you are interested in volunteering some time and giving back to your community, please feel free to connect any of our officers for 2008. They would be happy to answer your questions.

You can also write to us at:
Kiwaniis Club of the Ranchos,
37221 Avenue 12 1-C #29
Madera CA 93636

Remember, our club is meeting at the Pizza Factory. These meetings are open to the public. The Pizza Factory has graciously donated their meeting room for our use. Our meetings are every Thursday morning at 6:30 a.m. at the Pizza Factory, except the last Thursday of the month which is held at 6:30 p.m. to help accommodate our members who have difficulty attending the morning meetings. Thanks again to Hal and Mary Ann Parks for donating the meeting room at the Pizza factory. Our webpage is at www.ranchoskiwanis.org.



Ranchos Kiwanis presented a Community Service Award to Charles Diaz Trucking, represented by Mona Diaz, left, holding the award and her sons Casey and Charlie Diaz and husband Charles Diaz.

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September is Library Card Month at the Madera Ranchos Library

By Ellen Mester

On Aug. 1 the winners of the "Guess the Number of Bookworms in the Jar" contest were announced. Actually no one guessed the exact number which was 62, but there were four children who guessed 63. All four were awarded gift baskets. Congratulations to all who participated in the "Catch the Reading Bug" summer reading program. It has been a great summer.



One of four giftbasket winners was Alexis Delgado, shown here receiving her prize for guessing there were 63 "bookworms" in a jar at the Ranchos Library during the "Catch the Reading Bug" summer reading program.

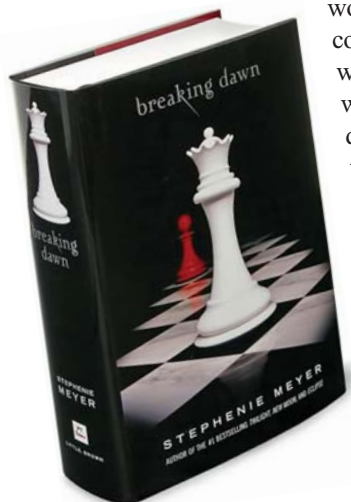
I also want to give one additional word of recognition and thanks to the Ranchos Kiwanis and the Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce for their continued support of this program. We wouldn't be able to have this wonderful program each year without the support of our local community organizations.

September is Library Card Month! For those of you who have never obtained a library card anywhere in the San Joaquin Valley, sign up

for your very own library card. It's FREE! Adults need photo identification and proof of address. Children under 15 years of age must have a parent or legal guardian with the above identification for library card registration. If you have lost your card, the replacement fee is \$2. School has started for many of you and I just want to remind you that the Ranchos Library is a great place to study, conduct research, complete homework and find the educational resources you need. There are four public computers with high-speed internet access and one designated typing station. InfoTrac database is available for library card holders to use from home or in the library. This subscription database offers peer-reviewed research papers from academic journals that are not available on the internet. We also have reference books, state, country and mission books. There are AR, or Accelerated Reader, notebooks from both Sierra View and Webster Elementary Schools that will help locate the appropriate AR books for your child's reading level. The library is open until 7 p.m. Monday through Thursday, until 5 p.m. on Friday, and from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday. Preschool story time is every Monday at 11 a.m. with Mrs. Anderson.

Book Recommendations

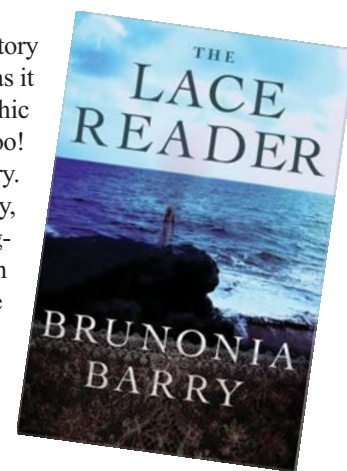
Young Adult Fiction: *Breaking Dawn* by Stephanie Meyer. This is the fourth book in the extremely popular *Twilight* series. Edward Cullen and Bella Swan's wedding at the Cullen house is spectacular with the unusual truce between werewolves and vampires staying under control while mingling comfortably with humans. That is until Bella, while dancing with Jacob, reveals a little too much about her future with Edward. The tense moment puts a chill on the otherwise perfect day as Jacob vanishes, transforming into his wolf body intent on leaving for good. Bella and Edward head off to honeymoon on a remote tropical island. Bella begins to consider postponing the inevitable and painful transformation process which she knows she must go through to become a vampire, but her love for Edward makes the decision easier, knowing their marriage would never succeed otherwise. Fate takes an odd turn however, as the unthinkable happens and Bella must make a choice: her life or the life of the child growing within her. For those readers who want a fast moving engaging story, begin with *Twilight*, *New Moon* and then *Eclipse* before



Breaking Dawn. Otherwise you'll be confused and the story won't be as appealing. It's a great series and not as dark as it sounds. There's no bad language or inappropriate graphic sexuality. Excellent for reluctant teen readers and adults too!

Adult Fiction: *The Lace Reader* by Brunonia Barry. Towner Whitney, the protagonist and narrator of the story, admits that she is a liar and a crazy woman. She has struggled with her past as the daughter of a woman who lives on a remote island off the shore of Salem, Mass., and as the great niece of Eva, the famous lace reader. Eva has held lace making circles and the reading of lace in her Salem home for decades. Suddenly Eva is missing and Towner

Please see **BOOKSHELF** on P. 15





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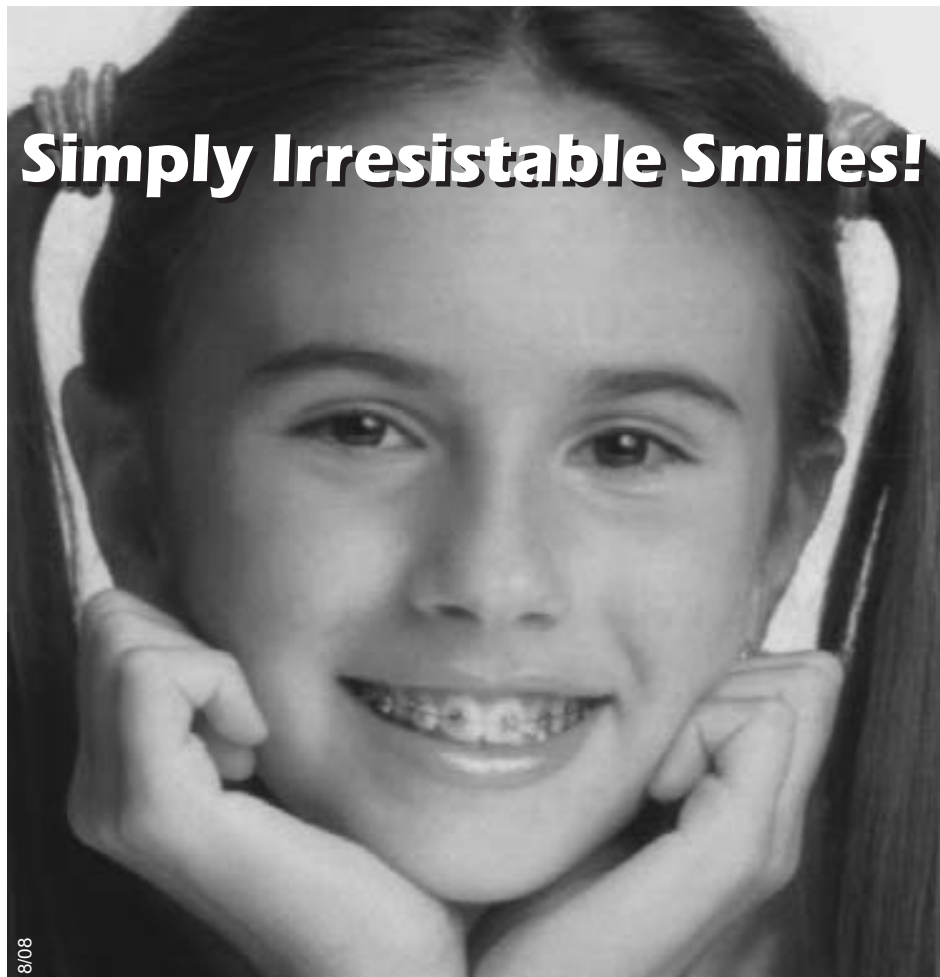
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The Stock Report

Find Out How Full *Your* Bucket is

By Audrey Stock

Hi Neighbors,

Want to read a good book? Pick up *How Full is Your Bucket?* It is a fast read about positive strategies and how they can change your life. The way we interact or the ways others interact with us affect our productivity and our health. The positive or negative way in which we live our lives affects ourselves and others with whom we have contact. Superintendent Sarah Koligian opened the new school year (2008-2009) by sharing this book with her administration staff and the school board members. Sarah has already started handing out positive drops to fill people's buckets and get the year started on a positive note.

I thought it was a really nice way to celebrate my birthday spending it with the Golden Valley Unified All Staff District In-Service on Aug. 11. Starting the year off on a positive foot is so important and Sarah did a great job. The most exciting

part of the in-service was when each school and district office staff had only 30 minutes to put together a spirit rally to represent their schools and the district. The teams were the district staff, Liberty High, Ranchos Middle, Webster Elementary; Sierra View Elementary and Education Opportunity schools. All were judged on team spirit, originality, creativity and group participation. What a great feeling to watch all of these wonderful people put their heart and soul into a team effort. As one of the judges, I had a terrible time because they were all so good. In any competition there has to be a winner and this year Webster Elementary won the "Spirit Stick" with their Webster ARMY chant. Who will win it next year? That is the question.

I used to think that starting school on a Wednesday was silly but now I know it gives the schools and the district time to get all of the

bugs out: the computers working, the air conditioners working and the students into the right rooms. So congratulations on the smooth beginning this year.

Webster Elementary has already had its Back to School Night. Parents have had an opportunity to meet their child's teacher and learn what the teacher's expectations are for the year. I had the opportunity to go to each teacher's room and welcome them back to the start of a new school year. Ranchos Middle School had their Back to School Night on Aug. 18, Sierra View Elementary Back to School Night was on Aug. 21, Liberty High Back to School Night was on Aug. 26 and Educational Opportunities was on Aug. 28. I am so glad that they are

Golden Valley has been ahead of the game with teaching Algebra I at the 8th grade but not all of our students were ready for it. I am hoping that the new math program will prepare Golden Valley students to succeed in this difficult subject.

all on different nights so that I was able to attend all of them.

As I write this article I am watching the Olympic Games on my TV as the images are streamed from China. I am so proud of our American athletes. Watching

Michael Phelps swim has been so much fun. I am glad that I wasn't the timer on the swim lanes for his swims. I used to time for swim meets at McLane when my children were on the school swim team years ago. The American swimmers, both men and women, have broken records this year. Michael Phelps swam into the history books with his eight gold medals. They have done an incredible job in the China heat and rain. We could sure use some of that rain couldn't we? I went to China last November with the Madera Chamber of Commerce and I watched the people in Beijing working so hard to get ready for these Olympics. This is a very ancient city and the Chinese had a huge job building hotels, restaurants, the Olympic village and the infrastructure to show a modern city to the world. The opening of the

Please see **STOCK** on P. 24

Life is Calling, are *You* Prepared?

By Eleanore Burchell

Hopefully you'll find this interesting on how many ways the term BE PREPARED is intertwined in our daily lives. Being prepared implies placing yourself in a state of constant readiness. Society has many suggestions on how we may be prepared in life, including having medical insurance, a stock of emergency food supplies, an American Red Cross disaster plan and even a book preparing new dads for what is to come.

The Boy Scout adaptation is BE PREPARED for life: to live happily without regret knowing you have done your best. A few years ago, we went to see Lion King on Broadway and in the lyrics they were teaching the animals to become prepared.

However, seniors need additional planning. We as seniors are in our golden years, but are we really prepared to deal with the rising prices of gas, food, utilities, etc.,

We as seniors are in our golden years, but are we really prepared to deal with the rising prices of gas, food, utilities, etc., while we are on a fixed income?

while we are on a fixed income? Can we really make it through this without robbing Peter to pay Paul? Are we really prepared to lose a spouse? Are we really prepared to hear about a terminal disease? We are seniors in our golden years but still need to be aware to BE PREPARED.

On July 15, Archie Judson Burton passed away. He had been a long time member and we will truly miss him. Many years ago, he operated the old historic service station located on Van Ness. Our membership would like to offer our sympathy to his wife, Barbara, their son and his family.

Our next monthly sale will be held on Saturday, Sept. 6 from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. The garden area still has many varieties of trees, including Japanese or Trident Maples, as well as a variety of new scrubs and flowering plants. The Treasure House will be open and ready to show off many new items to you. The bake and produce sales will be held in the main building. Normally we have cookies, breads, candy, pies and cakes. The summer produce is still in season. You just must see George's huge onions! Armenian cucumbers and sev-

eral types of squash are still available. There were large plums and several other types of fruit there last week so come in to see what we have now. Also the boutique section has displays of necklaces, earrings, paintings and antiques.

Remember the plant, produce and boutique sections are available Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. and Thursday evenings between 6 and 9 p.m.

The Ranchos/Hills member of the month is Joanne Blancett. Joanne was an only child who was born in Texas to Winnie and Homan Arnett. Some may have known Joanne's mother Winnie who was a Ranchos/Hills member until her death on Sept. 18, 2005. Joanne is a Fresno State College graduate. She is

the proud grandmother of six grandchildren. Joanne's husband, Bob, unfortunately was killed in an automobile accident in 1994. Holding the position of the Senior Nutrition Site Co-

ordinator for the Ranchos Hills Seniors, Joanne works at the center Monday through Friday 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. She enjoys traveling and also organizes the trips for Ranchos/Hills Senior Center. Call Joanne at 645-4864 if you are interested in traveling with our group.

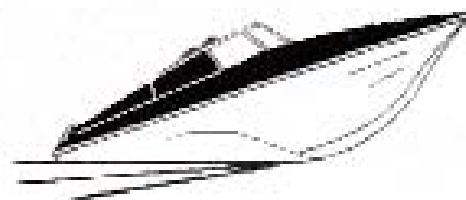
Did you know two nurses from the Madera County Health Department periodically come to the center to give FREE check ups? The screenings include a personal health history review, blood pressure check, blood sugar check, an available low-cost blood test, nutrition and health education, referrals to medical providers and community services, if needed. Health Screenings of Adults, age 50 and OVER, are available at our center ONLY when they receive your calls. If you are interested in taking advantage of their services, call Carla or Melody at 675-7893 to make an appointment.

If you are new to the area, lonely or just lost a spouse, we welcome you to come to see us. We are here for you. Many of our members have surely experienced your same situation.

Please see SENIORS on P. 11

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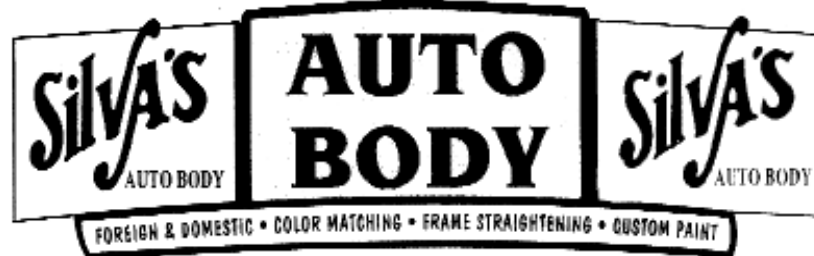
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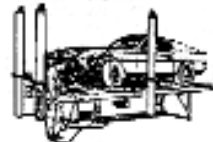


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SENIOR cont. from P. 10

THE UP SIDE

*Growing older is mandatory;
growing up is optional.*

*We make a living by what we earn
while we make our life by what we give.*

September's Birthday and Anniversary luncheon (or breakfast if you want it) will be held on Saturday, Sept. 20 at 11 a.m. at the Yukon Jacks, Highway 99 and Herndon in Fresno. Hope to see you there! The August celebration was held at the Little Red Caboose in Clovis. We had many members and their friends there to enjoy the WONDERFUL FOOD! Everyone seemed to have a good time.

BINGO is being held on the FIRST and THIRD Tuesdays each month from 6:30 to 9 p.m. Come join the fun!

In the senior years, many need someone to laugh with, so 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 at 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. We have a growing exercise program being held on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 10:15 to 11:30 a.m. The participants are getting more than just exercise by attending. They have fun and share laughs. There is still room for you and you can attend all three days or just one or two of them. The Line Dancing class has changed to Wednesdays at 1 p.m. This is fun and also a great way to exercise. The Watercolor Painting class has also changed. It is now scheduled on

Thursdays from 3 to 5 p.m. No prior watercolor experience is needed. The instructor can be reached by calling 645-1137. You do not need to be a member to attend these classes. We have a large group, but there is always room for one more: you! Fill your car with your friends or neighbors. They will enjoy finding new friends here, too! Come in and check these classes out!

Up and Coming Events

Sept. 6, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., Monthly Sale

Sept. 20, 11 a.m. at Yukon Jack's, Birthday & Anniversary Celebration

Oct. 4, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., Monthly Sale

Nov. 1-8, Eastern Caribbean Cruise

Weekly Events

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

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

Tuesday, Pinochle, noon until?

Tuesday, BINGO, 1st and 3rd of each month, 6:30 to 9 p.m.

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

Wednesday, noon to 1 p.m. card BINGO

Wednesday, Line Dancing, 1 p.m.

Thursday, 3 to 5 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 to 11:30 a.m.

Please feel free to come in and 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?

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PASTOR cont. from P. 6

let us therewith be content." When you die you will leave everything behind. You never see a hearse pulling a trailer. Learn to appreciate what you have without always wanting something more, bigger, newer.

Principle #4 - Sharing. This means I must give to others in need. Proverbs 11:24-25 "One man gives freely, yet gains even more. Another withholds unduly but comes to poverty. A generous man will prosper. He who refreshes others, will himself be refreshed." The Bible says that sharing with those in need is more than charity; it's smart finances. You're not throwing it away when you give some money to somebody in need; it's an investment. Proverbs 19:17 "He who is kind to the poor lends to the Lord and He will reward him for what he has done." God says, when you give to someone in need – you share with somebody who has a need in their life – God says He accepts that as if it were an actual loan to the Lord. That's amazing!

Principle #5 - Tithing. This means I must give back to God. Proverbs 3:9 "Honor the Lord with all your wealth with the first fruits of all your crops. Then your barns will be filled to overflowing and your vats will brim over with new wine." Tithing

is giving the first 10 percent back to God. The principle is, put God first in your finances with the first ten percent right off the top and He will help you.

The Bible teaches there are three purposes for tithing:

1. It has a past purpose. It shows our gratitude. When I write out a check and give I'm saying, "Lord, I'm grateful for the fact that I realize if it weren't for You, I wouldn't even have this."

2. It's a reminder for the present. Deuteronomy 14:23 "The purpose of tithing is to teach you to put God first in every area of your life." When I write out a check and give my offering it's reminding me that God is first place.

3. It's a step of faith for the future. It is saying, "God, I'm giving to You, realizing that You're going to bless me back in the future. I'm going to trust You to take care of me."

During the months of September through November Flipside will be in a series titled "M & M: Mating and Moola." It's about making our marriage and money work like they should. I want to invite you to learn with us how to make our marriage and our money be blessed.

Blessings, Pastor Karl
Flipside Christian Church

BYPASS cont. from P. 2

tion is a stretch from approximately Road 39½ and Road 36 that was to be determined by input from Ranchos residents, namely did we want up to six lanes down the center of the Ranchos or a bypass that would divert the fast-moving commuter traffic from point A to point B. The bypass suggestion also addressed leaving the center of the community to continue and develop its identity and main street character.

As the Aug. 27 meeting began, Bigelow again said, "We are here again to try and find out what the residents of the area want; we are not here to enforce our will, we are here to work on your behalf." And, as in past meetings, County Staff including planners and engineers attended the meeting and made another presentation explaining the traffic problems and potential solutions. Madera County Regional Management Agency Director Ray Beach said, "We are going to keep coming back and explain things until you will be tired of seeing us," referencing the number of several town-hall meetings over the past several months that had already taken place dealing with this subject.

But at the meeting on Aug. 27 the mood of the packed Senior Center was one nearing exasperation about the ordeal. Several people asked what the continued purpose of the meetings was when no one from the community ever spoke up in favor of widening Avenue 12. Attendees pointed out that the consensus at every meeting every time had been for a bypass of Avenue 12. Bigelow agreed and the County will now begin moving forward with the necessary steps to make a bypass a reality.

County Staff explained that the first task will be to prepare a letter for the County's Board of Supervisors' approval of the project, which could occur within a month. Once the Board approves the project the county engineers will prepare a study and provide alternatives that will be presented to the community for comment over approximately the next three to six months. At these public hearings everyone will be able to speak their minds and let their opinions be known. A complete design of the project including approvals may take a total of approximately two years from today.



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D.O.G. cont. from P. 4

morning, I did not understand why there was such a big rush, then I made a discovery: The Board wants no part of running the government.

Every aspect has been delegated, and farmed out.

For example, take the Resource Management Agency (RMA). I have been increasingly alarmed by the scope and the power that RMA has amassed. I was working on the assumption that Ray Beach, RMA Planning Director, was in the process of consolidating a power base. I like Ray and I have had several conver-

sations with him about County issues and what he sees for our future. I agree with much, if not most, of what he has seen fit to share with me – Special Districts and some of the Engineering Department project fiascos aside.

However, I feel RMA and Mr. Beach have far exceeded what a County depart-

ment should be directing.

We the people are represented by the Board.

The Board determines policy and direction for the County after thoughtful and open consideration with public input. The Board then gives “staff”/Department heads their marching orders. I just realized the Board wants no part of their portion of this equation. Much like in the case of the budget, the Board wants Staff to make the hard choices and take all of the heat while the Board sits on fourth floor of the “Granite Palace” taking the credit. Unfortunately, very little true direction comes out of this \$40+ million dollar edifice to the pompous arrogance of our government.

I have been criticizing Ray Beach for making policy decisions for the County, but as I look back over the past couple of years, I can see he had no choice. I can recall hearing him asking the board for direction and getting very little. When you as a department head have enough hot potatoes thrown your way you figure out it is up to you to deal with it on your own.

Back when I worked for the State some would say it was better to beg forgiveness than to ask permission, at least that way something will get done. What we are left with is five individual supervisors each poking at department heads with their own individual agendas. I have decided that the reason this manner of government has evolved is:

1. If you – as a supervisor – take up an issue at the Board meeting there is a chance it could be voted down and you could lose everything.

2. If you – as a supervisor – push an unpopular idea, you could lose votes.

3. If you deal with the Department heads one on one and behind closed doors, you can bully them into doing at least a portion of what you want to accomplish. If the idea is unpopular you sit back and let the department head take the heat.

This of course screws up everything, the chain of command falls apart and staff are running in five different directions at the same time. (This is where the joke that a camel is a horse designed by a committee comes in.)

It is not possible to have a County government run effectively by five individual supervisors. The County must be run by the “Board” of Supervisors.

D.O.G. Future - Pamela (my wife) and I had a long talk. We decided the old D.O.G. still has some fight in him. I remember a line from a movie that keeps running through my head: “It is not only my right to question my government ... it is my responsibility!”

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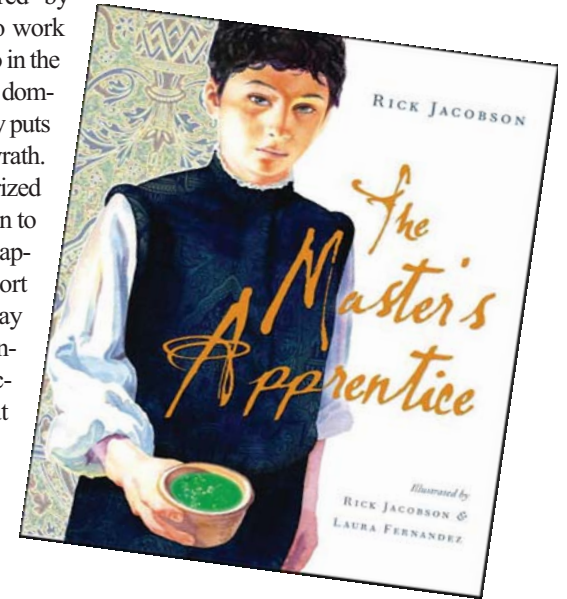
Click on "Local News" at

LIBRARY cont. from P. 8

returns to find her. Her complex relationship with her mother who is protecting a whole colony of battered women and children living on the island, and her uncle who is the head of a religious cult, add intensity and depth to this fascinating story, as do the local witches who dress up and play to the tourists. The detective, John Rafferty, who is searching for the missing Eva, adds some normalcy to the plot, yet could have had more character development. His troubled past is hinted but not explained. The story is spell-binding and leaves much over which to ponder. Great read for those who are looking for something different.

Juvenile Fiction: *The Master's Apprentice* by Rick Jacobson and illustrated by Laura Fernandez and Rick Jacobson. Marco has been trained by his father in Venice to create vibrant colors of paint used by the famous artists of the time. Because of this skill, Marco is hired by Michelangelo as a junior apprentice to work under a senior apprentice named Ridolfo in the city of Florence. Jealousy and meanness dominate Ridolfo's thinking as he continually puts Marco in the path of Michelangelo's wrath. Fortunately Marco is able to create a prized emerald color using a secret recipe given to him by his father and remains a valued apprentice to Michelangelo. This is a short story giving only a peek at what life may have been like for during the famous Renaissance period, but good as an introduction or compliment book about Michelangelo for children.

Check out these books and more at the library and don't forget your library card ... don't leave home without it!



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“Back to School” Kicks Off the 2008-2009 School Year



Golden Valley Unified School District Superintendent, Sarah Koligian.

By Superintendent Sarah Koligian

Dear Parents and Students,

Greetings and welcome back to the new school year in Golden Valley Unified School District. I hope that you and your children had a wonderful and relaxing summer vacation and that you are ready to kick-off the 2008/09 school year with much excitement and enthusiasm! As your Superintendent, I know I am truly looking forward to meeting each and every one of you and working in part-



At Webster Elementary, they were lining up early for the first day of classes.

nership with you to provide the best education possible for all of our students.

We kicked off the school year

with our Management Team Charge Session which was held on August 4th at Scout Island in Fresno. Our team of administrators and managers spent the day focusing on our goals for the year as outlined in our District Strategic Plan, thinking “outside the box” embracing our leadership roles for the year and reviewing the new management updates for the school year. We culminated our day on the San Joaquin River, learning how to canoe and

how to rely on each other as a team. We learned the safety tips and skills necessary to keep our canoe on course, how to stay out of the bushes and how to stay afloat. After our canoeing experience we compared and contrasted these skills to those that are required of us as leaders. It was an extremely productive day and a great way to further solidify our leadership team.

All GUVSD staff met for their first day back to work on August 11th for our District Inservice. We introduced newly hired staff, recognized staff with perfect attendance from last year as well as staff who have worked for GVUSD for five/10 years. I had the opportunity to share our new motivation focus for the school year by summarizing the book that we read over the summer titled, *How Full Is Your Bucket*, by Tom Rath and Don Clifton. We are using the concept of adding “drops” to each others buckets as symbols of positive reinforcement throughout the course of the year. Using the “bucket” concept, my Superintendent’s message to kick off the year was to celebrate all the

drops that were added to our bucket in the past year to give us a full bucket to kick off the new school year. We reviewed the target goals as they relate to the Dis-



Principal Scott Teft greets Sierra View Elementary's first day arrivals before class.

trict Strategic Plan through 1) Instruction and Assessment; 2) Communication; 3) Safety; 4) Facilities and 5) Finance. We culminated our day with the first-ever school/department Spirit Rally to show off our pride as members of



The attendance office at Liberty High was jumping on the first day of classes.

the GVUSD team. The competition was rigorous as teams competed for the highly sought after “spirit stick”. Even though each team’s cheer was highly competitive, the judges awarded the GVUSD “spirit stick” to Webster Elementary.

Staff anxiously greeted students back on August 13th for their first day of school. It is always

one of my favorite times of the year as I see student’s smiling faces as they are greeted by their bus drivers, principals, teachers, office staff, custodians and all other support staff. Our children are making new transitions in their school careers by either starting school for the first time, going to school for a full day rather than a half day, beginning a new middle school or high school, entering one of our schools from another district, or meeting their new teacher.

Whatever the situation, the GVUSD staff at the school and district level is committed to the following:

Providing the best education possible for all students

Providing a safe, secure and caring learning environment

Meeting students where they are academically and helping them progress forward to meet their potential

Developing well-rounded students who are actively engaged in co-curricular activities that mold them into good citizens both in and out of school

As parents, we play an incredibly important role in our children’s educational future. I know we have an extremely dedicated parent community in Golden Valley and I continue to encourage each of you to become involved in your child’s education from kindergarten through their senior year. There are many opportunities for parents to support their children at school and at home. We are more than willing to work with you as partners in your child’s education as we prepare them to become productive members of our society. I will be scheduling regular Superintendent/Parent Coffee meetings throughout the school year to have an opportunity

to meet parents and to share updates with you. I also want to hear from you about your hopes and dreams for your children and for our district. If you are not able to attend these meetings, you are always welcome to contact me at the District Office at 645-7500 or email me at skoligian@gvUSD.k12.ca.us.

As we embrace the new school year, I want to remind each of us that leadership is everyone’s job and our children are counting on us.



The seventh and eighth graders were on hand as Ranchos Middle School opened its doors.

“Whether we are called upon to be involved in leading government or business, guiding young minds, leading a family, standing for what is right, or organizing a dinner, a carpool, or a household, everyone has a leadership role to play.”

- Michael McKinney



Educational Options Principal Jim Green, second from left, welcomes three new students to class.

Click on “Local News” at

Projects Advance at Golden Valley

During the week-end of Aug. 9, Road 36 reopened just east of Liberty High School. In the span of approximately two months, underground improvements for drainage were made to Road 36, new sidewalks and a new intersection with Avenue 12 ½ were added. The project was originally slated to be completed in late August, however Tri Counties Paving committed to the project in conjunction with Golden Valley Unified School District, Harris Construction and the County of Madera to complete the project prior to the new school year.



The work at Ranchos Middle School is progressing right on schedule.

as well as a new sound system. Power was also extended to the baseball field for scoreboards and future construction at LHS. Expect no more diesel generators to light our facility.

Construction continues on Ranchos Middle School and the project is progressing quite well. Our Governing Board of Trustees visited the site with the construction manager in early August. RMS staff also visited the site prior to the start of the new school year. Fifteen prime contractors are continuously being coordinated by Harris Construction to stay on task and on schedule. Gym walls have been raised and steel erection continues on the remainder of buildings. Work is being followed closely so that the buildings are winterized prior to the arrival of our fall and winter seasons.

Also completed in this time frame was the Liberty High School Sportsfield Lighting Project. Tim Trull Electric Co, Inc. was the prime contractor for this project. Football lights now adorn the campus at Liberty High School



In addition to new lighting and sound, the scoreboard now sits at the north end of the field.

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GV Admin Works on Teamwork



Paddling canoes down the San Joaquin River was an exercise in coordinating as a team.



"Thinking outside the box" in a group was also part of the problem solving exercises.

Funny how a little miracle can bring a family back to church.

She needs all the love and guidance

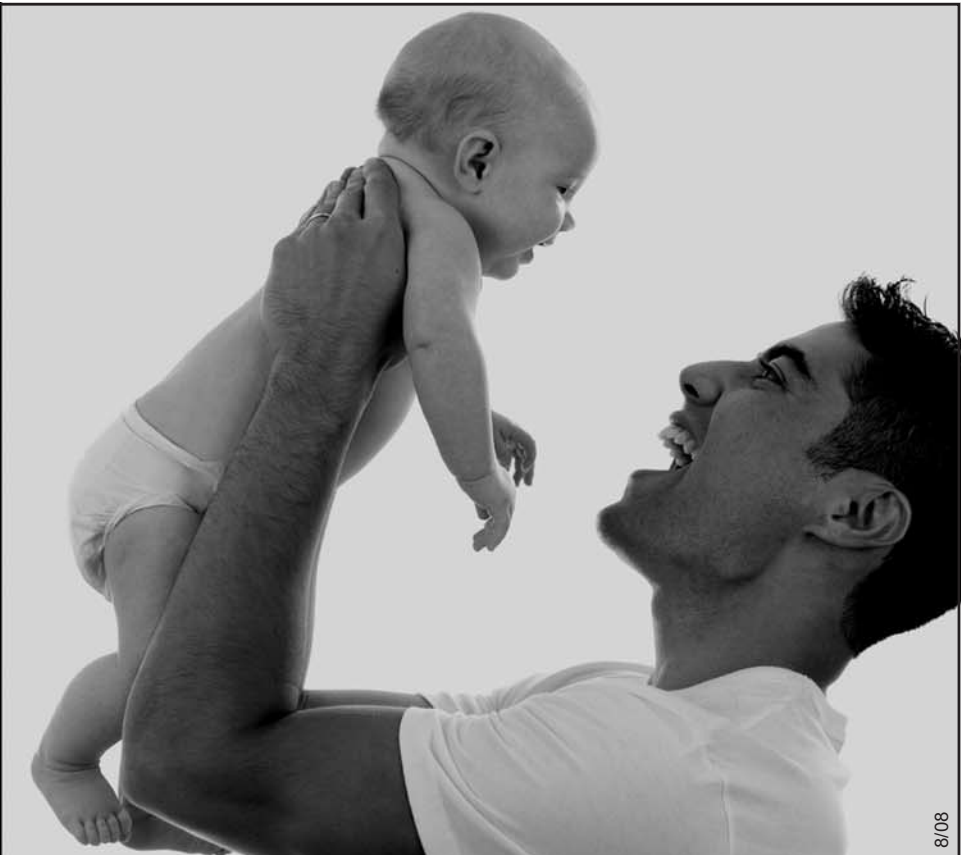
you can give. And then some. We can help.

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you set for her and help her find her place

in God's family.

Where there's plenty of room for you, too.



8/08

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Meeting at 36875 Avenue 12 • the corner of Avenue 12 and Loren Way
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LETTERS cont. from P. 4

Dear Editor,

I was shocked to see in the July issue of the Ranchos Independent newspaper the story of Will Everett arrested for suspicion of burglary and possession of stolen property. The bail set for \$15,000 over a pair of stolen chaps worth \$200. In the picture is a set of saddle bags he BORROWED and a saddle he BORROWED. The picture didn't come from a "Mule Rider's Photo Album," it came from another person on the trip to Montana De Oro. It was the first time Will had ever seen the ocean.

The blond-haired, blue-eyed boy mentioned in the article has a record for drugs along with his "dumpster diving Dad." I do without a doubt believe that said father and son gave Will the "stolen chaps."

Will is a honest, hard working young man. Always there in a pinch to feed when needed. Always helpful with cleaning stalls or carrying in the groceries. If he needed something he would ask to borrow it. Whether it be a trailer to take someone else's sick horse to the vet or a tool to work on someone else's equipment. A funny, soft spoken person that is great with any kind of animal which are the truest judges of character as far as I am concerned.

Name Withheld Upon Request
Madera Ranchos

Dear Editor:

Thanks to the Independent, Sup Bigelow and staff from Madera Co. for the meetings on the Avenue 12 bypass.

Now that some of us have moved on from the Avenue 9 option, the decision of an Avenue 12 bypass appears to be a unanimous option. At least from those in attendance at the Aug. 20th meeting. I did not hear anyone in opposition bring up an argument for the widening of Avenue 12.

How will we determine the opinion of the entire community? I would suggest we use a ballot, which would be handed to each voter at the Liberty High School polling place at the next election in November. I assume the LHS polling spot covers everyone in the Ranchos. It would be a separate ballot from the National/State ballot, in a separate envelope and placed in a separate box which would be given to Supervisor Bigelow. Perhaps have an unbiased group count the vote, like the student body officers of LHS. This might give them a lesson in civics. Place any and all questions the county may deem necessary on that page. Have a sample ballot on the back page of the Independent prior to the election so

everyone may read and understand it before going to the poll.

There should be at least two, maybe three Independents before the election. Perhaps anyone opposed to the bypass, and for the widening of Avenue 12 through the Ranchos, can make their case prior to the election.

Just an idea. I appreciate the opportunity to have these community meetings.

Bob Campbell
Madera Ranchos

Dear Editor:

What is it exactly that merits a 1/3 color page ruining a young man's chance of working in this community ever again? Many of Will [Everett's] friends do not believe he even took the chaps, let alone should be in jail at such a high bail. He is a 21-year-old man trying to make a living. He works well with horses, always polite and helpful, and here is his photo in the paper like he is already a convicted felon. Posting a color picture of him with the accusatory article seems harsh when he has not been proven guilty of "taking" the \$200 pair of chaps.

I am one of the first people to have met Will when he came from Oklahoma down on his luck looking for work. He came by regularly helping build fences and caring for animals, never even wanting compensation but out of the goodness of his heart. I find it especially interesting that there was not one article regarding certain other community members who are now serving time in prison for their felonies. Informing the community of events transpired is a great idea, however let's be sure to not let personal vendettas or personal alliances dictate information, and perhaps enlighten the community of ALL that transpires. I am sure the community would be shocked about what doesn't make the paper.

Name Withheld Upon Request
Madera Ranchos

(Editor's Note: I present this letter in its entirety as I received it. RB)

Dear Folks:

I am your little lost dog. I hitched a ride about three weeks ago with two ladies in a white van. They stopped to get me out of the street and I climbed into their van. This was at the intersection of Topper and Blossom in the Ranchos.

I am a tiny black and mahogany mini-pincer. I look like a miniature Doberman Pincer. At 5 pounds overweight I weigh 10 pounds.

The people caring for me say you must love me because I am well behaved and obedient. I don't chew things or potty in the house even if left alone. I am intelligent, playful and loving, even with the cat.

They put an ad in the "found" column of the Madera Tribune and signs at the Ranchos cafe, Ranchos Market, Pete's and on the message board by the Sheriff's office.

No one responded.

I have three small dogs to play with but I miss you and I want to come home.

Please call me at 559-903-9888. Ask for "Hitch." I don't want to go to the pound.

Ellen Fahrlander for Hitch
Madera Ranchos

The Ranchos Independent welcomes your letters. Whether you're a fan or someone looking for something to line the birdcage, we want to hear from you.

Send your letters to:

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ranchosnews@theranchos.com

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Sunday School.....8:30 a.m.	Missionettes (Girls 5-17)
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Ranchos Dance Group Wins 1st Place



In July, Starforce Dance Headquarters went to Disneyland to the Creation Dance National Competition. "Kids of the Future" performed by Lila Castillo, age 9, and Macy Jordan, age 9, (left photo), took first place overall for a duet ages 12 and under. The Pom Mix (right photo) received a special judges' award.

Get Up to Speed and Save at the Pump

By Christi McKinney

Part II of Two Parts

Purchase gas when it's cooler outside: gas becomes denser in cooler temperatures. Since gas pumps only measure volume, not density, you'll get better gas mileage by fueling up in cooler temperatures.

Don't fill up when you're down to a quarter tank: You're hauling a lighter load as the tank nears empty. Fuel up on low-cost days, statistically Tuesdays and Wednesdays. When you need to fill up, fill up all the way; \$10 trips to the station mean additional travel time. Do it all at once to save on time and efficiency.

Fill up before the holiday: Fill up at least three days prior to a holiday when prices always go up!

Don't top off the tank! It wastes money and is bad for the environment. The extra gas evaporates within 10 minutes of driving off.

Take Care of Your Car!

Octane Levels: Most cars are designed to run most efficiently on lower octane fuel.

Tuning up your car can increase your gas mileage by 4 percent.

Changing your oil removes harmful substances from your engine and improves mileage.

Changing your oil filter regularly can increase gas mileage by as much as 10 percent.

Keeping your tires properly inflated and aligned can improve gas mileage by 3 percent.

Using steel belted radials can increase gas mileage by 10 percent.

Take the junk out of your trunk! An extra 100 lbs. will reduce your fuel economy by 2 percent.

Keep mileage and service records: consider this information an early warning system to make you aware of any potential problems with your car.

Remove unnecessary accessories such as roof racks, bike racks, ski racks or luggage carriers. They cause drag and reduce fuel efficiency by as much as 5 percent.

ciency by as much as 5 percent.

Stay within posted speed limits. Gas mileage decreases rapidly at speeds above 60 mph. Drive at a consistent speed. Avoid quick acceleration and hard braking and use cruise control whenever possible.

Avoid idling: Your car gets 0 miles per gallon when idling. Your engine warms up faster when driving than it does when idling. Idling wastes about a quart of gas every 15 minutes.

Avoid frequent stops and starts. Plan errands at off peak hours whenever possible. When approaching a red light slow down enough to avoid stopping. Take off slowly from a full stop. Don't peel out! This is the one single adjustment that will have the greatest affect on your gas mileage.

Don't tailgate! Maintain a safe distance, this will help avoid unnecessary accelerating and stopping and is much safer. Also ignore tailgaters! This is a dangerous practice and will jeopardize your safety. Move over and allow them to pass as soon as it's safe.

Parking: Don't spend 10 minutes cruising the parking lot for the closest space. Find the first convenient spot and park there for the duration. Consider the walk between stops an added health benefit!

Steer clear of gas savings gadgets: The Federal Trade Commission advises consumers that nearly all gas-saving devices do not work, and some even decrease fuel mileage. Intake twisters, gas pills and fuel line magnets do not help mileage. Even if the mileage improvement claims were true, they often cost enough to negate any potential savings. For a full list of tested products, visit their web site at www.ftc.gov/SaveGas

Consider this... Is the huge, tricked out, gas guzzling SUV necessary? Is it the status symbol it used to be? If you regularly transport a soccer team, maybe, but driving it back and forth to work is a waste of money. Consider parking the SUV and using a more fuel efficient vehicle for commuting. Don't drive more car than you have to!

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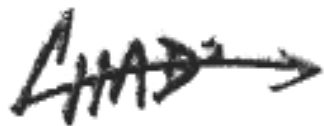


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8/08

No Mystery in Madera - It's a Scam

The letters started arriving at homes as far north as Vancouver, Ore., then in northern California and now in Madera. The hook is the same: "MARTWHYTE, PLC," an alleged PR firm, offers a perspective mystery shopper thousands of dollars to spend at designated stores. Your job, if you choose to accept, is to pose as a shopper and judge customer relations. MARTWHYTE, PLC promises flexible hours assuring the mystery shopper will be paid to shop and dine-out plus "... get free meals, free merchandise, free services, free entertainment, free travel and more."

Sheriff John Anderson says this mys-

tery offer is a hoax and so is the check issued to those who buy into it.

Anderson was alerted to the scam by a Madera woman who said she answered an ad for a mystery shopper published in her local newspaper. After responding and filling out a questionnaire she received a check in the mail and was advised via email that she would be given directions as to how and where to spend the money.

For more information on this and other mystery shopper scams, visit the Federal Trade Commission's Website at: www.ftc.gov/bcp/online/pubs/alerts/mysteryalrt.shtm.

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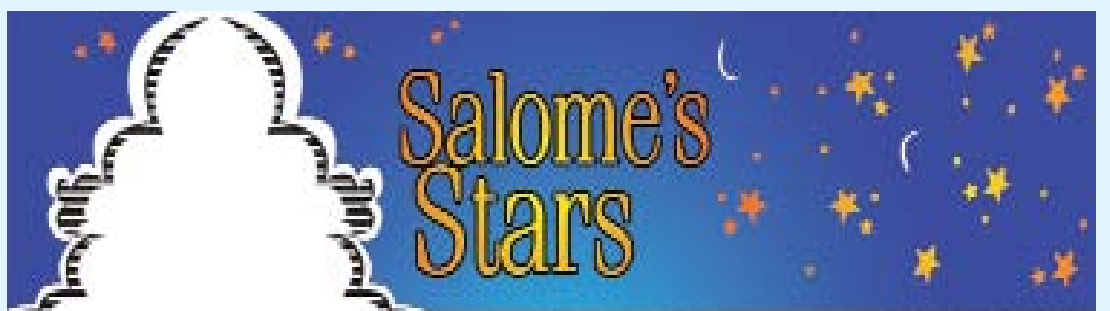
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TAURUS (April 20 to May 20) Your efforts to defend your project begin to show favorable results. You should soon be able to win over even the most determined detractors who had lined up against it.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20) You win praise for your selfless efforts in a very difficult situation. But be careful not to allow your generous nature to be exploited by those who have their own agenda.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22) A trusted colleague sheds light on a recent spate of puzzling workplace situations. This should give you the information you need to bring to your superior's attention.

LEO (July 23 to August 22) A shift in workplace management could be helpful for talented Leos and Leonas who have been waiting to have their accomplishments rewarded by receptive leadership.

VIRGO (August 23 to September 22) A misunderstanding between you and someone you care for should be corrected immediately. This relationship is too important to lose over a bruised ego.

LIBRA (September 23 to October 22) A welcome piece of good news helps clear the air in a family situation. A job-related incident also eases as more information provides a clearer focus on the problem.

SCORPIO (October 23 to November 21) Quick action to heal bruised feelings pays off in a big way. Now you'll be able to move forward with your plans without that problem holding you back.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22 to December 21) Your creativity combined with a positive attitude should give you a considerable edge in finding a way to get around the negativity you've run into.

CAPRICORN (December 22 to January 19) That sudden streak of stubbornness could cause some problems. Try to be more open to helpful suggestions and more flexible in making needed changes.

AQUARIUS (January 20 to February 18) Now that that special relationship appears to be well and truly restored, you can spend more time dealing with those long-needed workplace changes.

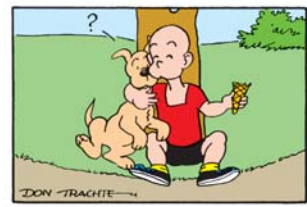
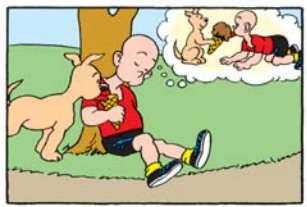
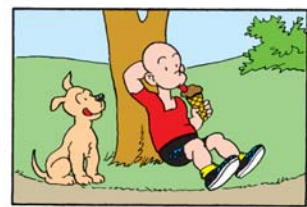
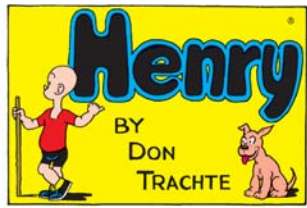
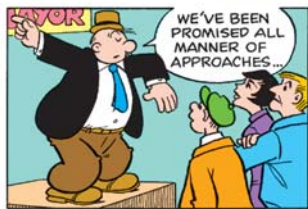
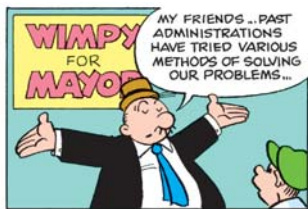
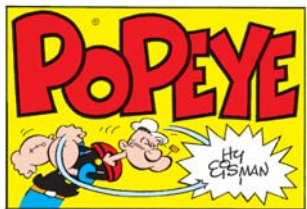
PISCES (February 19 to March 20) A new opportunity sounds promising. But watch out for any conditions that might be attached. Before making a decision, ask that each one be explained in detail.

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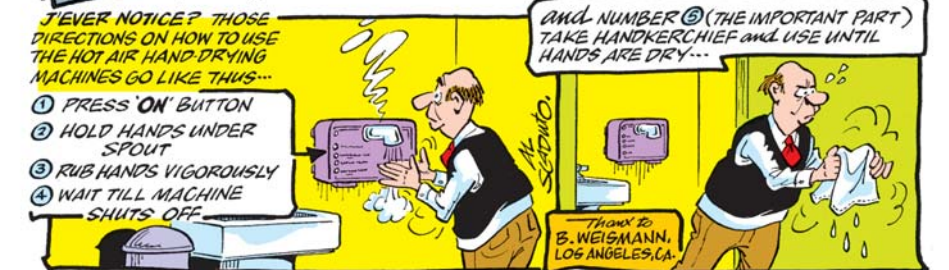
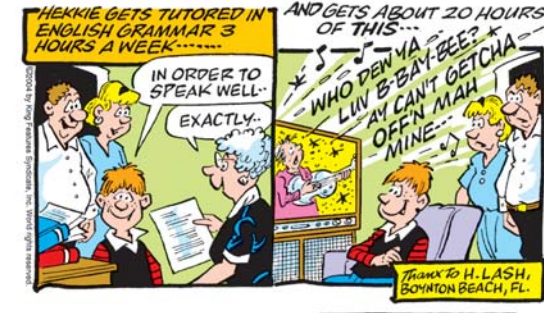
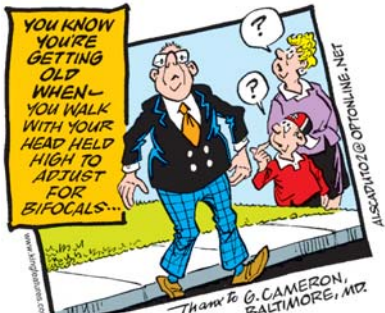
Born this Week

You can be distracted by promises of good times, yet you ultimately reach the goals you set for yourself.

FUN PAGES



THEY'LL DO IT EVERY TIME



DIAMOND RING TOSS
JIMMY JUST WON a genuine Fakeridium, almost-diamond ring. You have one guess to determine which toss was the lucky one.

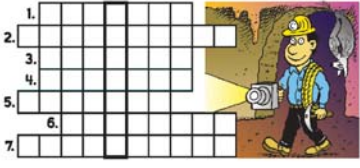
X-RAY VISION! Say to your friend, "I'll bet you that if you place a quarter in the palm of my hand, tails-side up, I can tell you what the date is just by looking at the back of the coin." After he places the coin on your hand, look at it for a moment, then tell him what today's date is. After all, you didn't say you'd tell him the coin's date!

LET THE WORD GAMES BEGIN! At right is a word square. Can you find the four five-letter words that match the definitions below? All words used must read the same both across and down.

Answers: 1. Heart, 2. Earle, 3. Arena, 4. Flinks, 5. Tease.

Junior Whirl

by Charles Barry Townsend
IT'S SPELUNKING TIME!



Let's go caving. In the grid to the left, there is room to enter seven words pertaining to cave exploration. Don't go "batty" looking for the right ones. The following hints should be of help:

1. A large cave room.
2. A ceiling feature.
3. Their pictures are often found on cave walls.
4. All spelunkers should wear these.
5. What you do in a cave.
6. This is often the smallest part of a cave.
7. Needed most when exploring a cave.

There is a dark frame around one of the columns in our grid. If you correctly solve the puzzle, the letters in the frame, top to bottom, will tell you what the name of a famous cave is.

Answers: 1. Chamber, 2. Stalactite, 3. Animals, 4. Helmets, 5. Explore, 6. Entrance, 7. Flashlight. The dark framed column spells "Mammoth," the name of a famous cave in Kentucky.

Wishing Well®

2	4	6	4	2	8	3	6	8	4	6	7	8
Y	F	S	A	O	Y	P	E	O	M	C	S	U
5	3	7	8	2	4	3	4	6	3	5	7	5
L	R	E	A	U	I	O	L	U	M	E	C	A
7	5	2	3	8	4	3	8	3	4	2	3	6
R	D	R	O	R	Y	T	E	I	V	E	O	R
3	6	7	4	3	5	7	2	4	8	4	2	4
N	E	E	I	A	T	T	C	S	C	I	E	T
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I	H	S	T	E	L	V	W	S	W	O	O	E
5	3	5	7	2	7	2	3	7	6	2	7	8
A	R	Y	A	P	R	R	K	E	V	I	S	O
7	6	8	2	8	7	8	7	8	7	2	8	7
H	E	N	Z	T	A	E	R	N	E	E	T	D

HERE IS A PLEASANT LITTLE GAME that will give you a message every day. It's a numerical puzzle designed to spell out your fortune. Count the letters in your first name. If the number of letters is 6 or more, subtract 4. If the number is less than 6, add 3. The result is your key number. Start at the upper left-hand corner and check one of your key numbers, left to right. Then read the message the letters under the checked figures give you.

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G N S L T H J G E C I E Z X V
T N R U F I I P N L P C E J H
E C I A R Y N P W T S N G R V
T R P Y I B D O T N N E N R G
L K I (A L D E R M A N) F U E G
E C B Z L F X G A I I W O T U
S R P O E R O T A G I L L A M
L J I O D O M O K S O G E W D
B A Y X W U T S Q D E N R O H

Find the listed words in the diagram. They run in all directions - forward, backward, up, down and diagonally.

Alderman	Frilled	Komodo	Spiny
Alligator	Giant	Lounge	Water
Dragon	Green	Monitor	Whiptail
Fence	Horned	Sagebrush	

TRIVIA TEST

By Fifi Rodriguez

1. GENERAL KNOWLEDGE: What was the name of the priest who founded Boys Town?
2. ANATOMY: What is a more common name for horripilation?
3. SCIENCE: What do serologists study?
4. MOVIES: What was the name of the main character in "The Saint" series of films?
5. LITERATURE: Who wrote the memoir "Life on the Mississippi"?
6. GEOGRAPHY: The Douro River flows through which two countries?
7. TELEVISION: What is the theme song for the reality TV show "Cops"?
8. MUSIC: How many copies does a record have to sell for it to go platinum?
9. ANIMAL KINGDOM: What kind of animal is a gerenuk?
10. MYTHOLOGY: What aspect of life or death was governed by the Roman god Janus?

- ### Answers
1. Father Edward Flanagan
 2. Goose bumps
 3. Blood serum
 4. Simon Templar
 5. Mark Twain
 6. Spain and Portugal
 7. "Bad Boys"
 8. 1 million
 9. Gazelle
 10. Janus was the god of gates and doors, beginnings and endings
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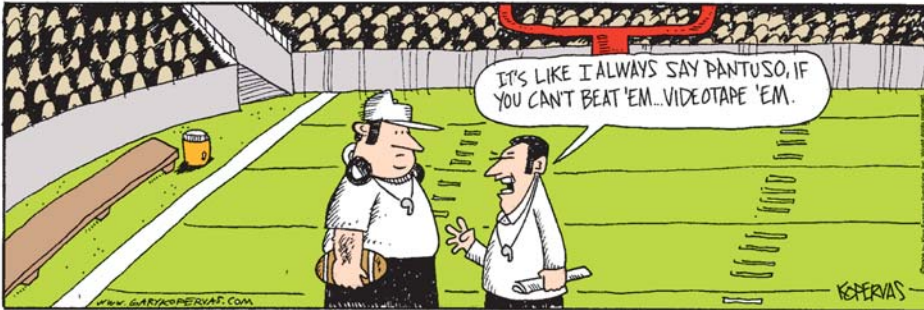
Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps



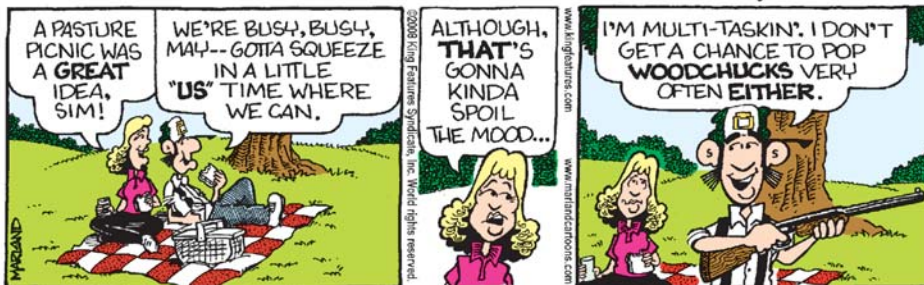
Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas



R.F.D.

by Mike Marland



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JERRY CRAFT



The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



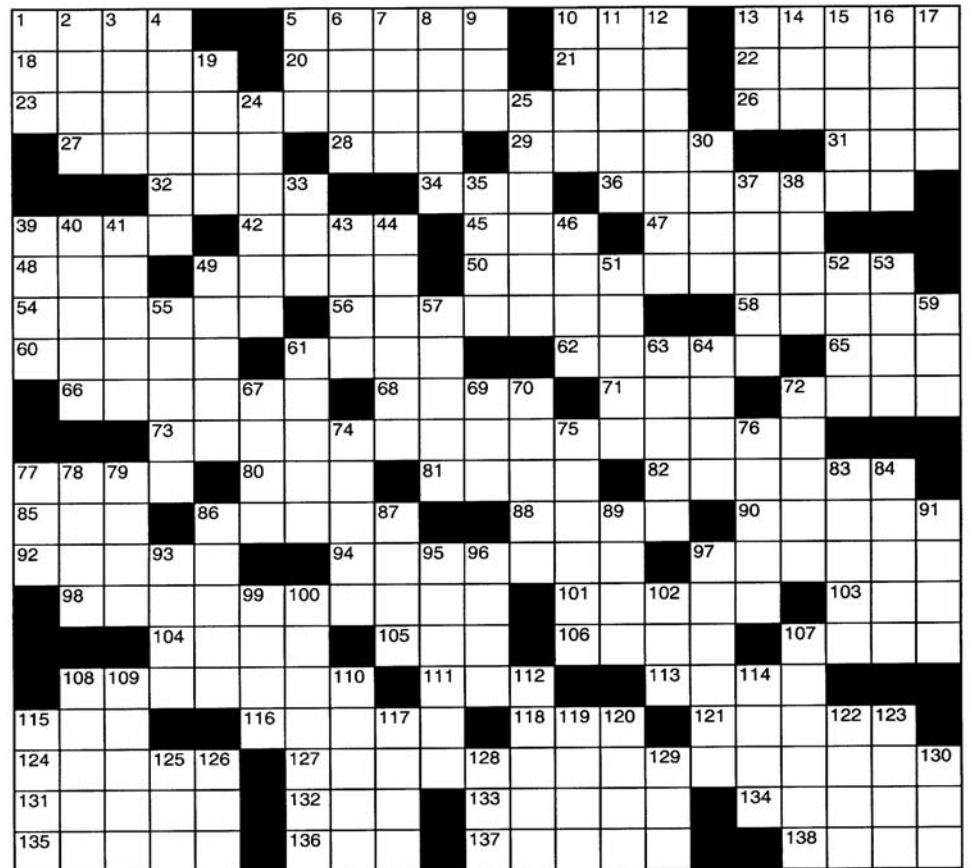
HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels. Differences: 1. Book title is different. 2. Woman's hand is hidden. 3. Picture is added to wall. 4. Man's fork is gone. 5. Woman's apron is missing. 6. Woman's right hand is hidden.

Super Crossword



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ACROSS

- 1 Thieves
- 5 Dress down
- 10 Accomplished
- 13 English explorer
- 18 French spa
- 20 Home on high
- 21 A mean Amin
- 22 "Pygmalion" role
- 23 Start of a remark by Gene Perret
- 26 On the up and up
- 27 Director Sergio
- 28 Grazing ground
- 29 Overact
- 31 Have a mortgage
- 32 Become engaged?
- 34 EMT's skill
- 36 "La Boheme" girl
- 39 Depravity
- 42 Heavy metal instrument?
- 45 Mellow
- 47 Rajasthani rhythm
- 48 Coach Parseghian
- 49 Kayak commander
- 50 Part 2 of remark
- 54 Verbal explosion
- 56 Pittsburgh player
- 58 Skirt feature
- 60 Tangle
- 61 "May I interrupt?"
- 62 Vision
- 65 Cookbook phrase
- 66 Impressive lobby
- 68 Catches cod
- 71 Runner Sebastian
- 72 Karras or Haley
- 73 Part 3 of remark
- 77 Suggestive
- 80 — Na Na
- 81 Beloved
- 82 Type of aircraft
- 85 Maestro de Waart
- 86 Fusillade
- 88 Khartoum's river
- 90 Hopeless case
- 92 Jeeves or Passe-partout
- 94 Focused
- 97 Watchful city?
- 98 Part 4 of remark
- 101 Perfect
- 103 One of the Marches
- 104 Anesthetize
- 105 Fitting
- 106 Manuscript enc.
- 107 Goofy Gomer
- 108 Field event
- 111 "— the fields we go . . ."
- 113 Ballet movement
- 115 Overwhelm
- 116 Recruit personnel
- 118 Good times
- 121 Sari site
- 124 Rent
- 127 End of remark
- 131 Party present
- 132 Myriads of moons
- 133 "Midnight at the —" ('74 hit)
- 134 "— Gay"
- 135 Fight site
- 136 Room for relaxing
- 137 Marine leader?
- 138 Hardware item
- 3 Ill temper
- 4 She knew how to get a head
- 5 Droop
- 6 Do overhead plastering
- 7 Sarah — Jewett
- 8 Pale purple
- 9 "— volente"
- 10 "Carpe —"
- 11 Turn of phrase
- 12 Bother
- 13 "Fantasia" frame
- 14 Fish-and-chips accompaniment
- 15 Chauvinist
- 16 Conductor Seiji
- 17 Yarn
- 19 Muse count
- 24 Snuggle up abbr.
- 25 "The Aeneid" author
- 30 Jacob's twin
- 33 Tint
- 35 "— Rider" ('85 film)
- 37 Neighbor of Libya
- 38 Kite part
- 39 Places to dye
- 40 One of "The Three Sisters"
- 41 Jeweler's weight
- 43 41st or 43rd President
- 44 Be there
- 46 Gets by, with "out"
- 49 Impromptu
- 51 Author Jong
- 52 Patricia of "Hud"
- 53 Wild wind
- 55 Deck out
- 57 Edit a text
- 59 Duty
- 61 Menotti title character
- 63 Have thirds and fourths?
- 64 Cure
- 67 — Minor
- 69 Peg for Palmer
- 70 Footballer Lynn
- 19 Muse count
- 72 Option
- 74 Maritime abbr.
- 75 Turning point
- 76 Actor Bruce
- 77 Part of IRS
- 78 Eliot's "— Bede"
- 79 Fountain order
- 83 Foe
- 84 Party hearty
- 86 Walk like a rooster
- 87 Recruit-to-be
- 89 Helen of Troy's mom
- 91 Wrath
- 93 Cubist
- 95 Warning
- 96 Tivoli's Villa d'—
- 97 Ancient tongue
- 99 Little devils
- 100 Bordered on
- 102 Kreskin's letters
- 107 Know-it-all
- 108 Vow
- 109 Throw forcefully
- 110 Resort lake
- 112 Bucolic
- 114 Memo start
- 115 — Romeo
- 117 Actress Sherilyn
- 119 "Yo!" at the library
- 120 Move a bit
- 122 "Blame — the Bossa Nova" ('63 hit)
- 123 Bill of Rights grp.
- 125 Every guy is one
- 126 Cy Young stat
- 128 Debtor's letters
- 129 Govt. agency
- 130 Beaver or beret

FUN PAGES

STOCK cont. from P. 9

Olympic Games was four hours of the most incredible job of choreographing 19,000 people to put on a lesson in Chinese history. I had the feeling while I was in China that this was a strong country and a people that are going to play a large part on the world stage. China has every right to be proud.

All of Golden Valley teachers and students have new math books this year. That means that the teachers will have to make some adjustments in the way that they teach math. Assistant Superintendent Andy Alvarado put together math training for our K-6 teachers on how to use the new math textbooks. I am glad to hear that the teachers are excited to use these new math books. I have been concerned from the very beginning about Golden Valley's

math scores. I am hoping that these new textbooks based on the California standards will bring the district scores up. On Aug. 12, California Superintendent of Public Instruction, Jack O'Connell announced that California schools need to teach Algebra I to all 8th graders in the next three years. Golden Valley has been ahead of the game with teaching Algebra I at the 8th grade but not all of our students were ready for it. I am hoping that the new math program will prepare Golden Valley students to succeed in this difficult subject.

The September school board meetings will be held on Sept. 9 and Sept. 23 at the Liberty library at 6 p.m. I hope to see you there. The new Community Guides are hot off the presses. If you would like one just stop by the local Chamber of Commerce and pick one up. I keep mine by the telephone.

23rd ANNUAL 

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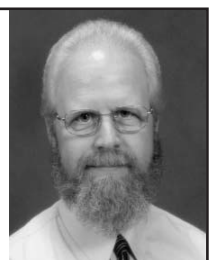


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SUDOKU
 by Linda Thistle

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

Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

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GO FIGURE! by Linda Thistle

	+		x		26
-		÷		x	
	x		+		21
x		x		+	
	+		-		10
14		18		24	

The idea of Go Figure is to arrive at the figures given at the bottom and right-hand columns of the diagram by following the arithmetic signs in the order they are given (that is, from left to right and top to bottom). Use only the numbers below the diagram to complete its blank squares and use each of the nine numbers only once.

2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 9

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EDO	SALVO	NILE	GOONER
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MARRIAGE	IS	IDEAL	MEG
NUMB	APT	SASE	PLYE
SHOT	PUT	OVER	PLIE
AW	STAFF	UPS	INDIA
LEASE	THE	FIRST	SCRATCH
FAVOR	EON	OASIS	ENOLA
ARENA	DEN	ULTRA	TNUT

5	+	8	X	2	26
—	÷	X			
3	X	4	+	9	21
X	X		+		
7	+	9	—	6	10
14		18			24

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ALDERMANFUE

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

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