

The Ranchos Independent



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Gateway Village Inches Closer

Twelve years in the making, the community of Gateway Village appears to be getting closer to becoming a reality. Located at Highway 41 and Ave. 12, the Castle & Cooke planned community will ultimately house approximately 20,000 people in 6,500 new homes surrounded by parks, businesses and the Castle & Cooke lifestyle trumpeted in their other properties.

Over the last year there were challenges to the project's specific plan, area plan, infrastructure plan and Environmental Impact Report (EIR). All of those concerns have been addressed and revised and now the updated plans have been forwarded to the Madera County Planning



Commission for approval.

In preparation of the plan going forward, Castle & Cooke have sponsored a series of Town Hall meetings in the Ranchos to share information and allow residents to ask questions.

Two key questions raised at the meetings have been water availability and allowances for school construction. Plans for a water treatment plant were unveiled at one meeting and it was reported that negotiations are ongoing with Golden Valley Unified over school needs.

After Planning Commission approval, Board of Supervisors approval will clear the way for construction to finally begin.

School Superintendent Shepherd Quits for Coast Dr. Marilyn Shepherd Taking Same Position in Larger Monterey, Calif.

By Randy Bailey

In a turn of events that has shocked many Ranchos residents, Golden Valley Unified School District Superintendent Dr. Marilyn Shepherd has announced that she will be stepping down from her position with the school district to accept a comparable position with the Monterey Peninsula Unified School District after that school board's trustees meet Monday, Dec. 18 to approve the selection of Shepherd.

"I want the people of the Ranchos to know I didn't go looking for this job," Shepherd asserts, "I was recruited to meet with the school board of Monterey."

After only three years as Superintendent of Golden Valley, the word had gotten out about the job Shepherd had been doing in the Ranchos and when the Monterey Peninsula Unified School District Board went looking for a replacement, their search quickly narrowed from a field of 12 to only one - Marilyn Shepherd.

"Monterey has issues very similar to Golden Valley, only on a larger scale," she said.

And she's right. Golden Valley houses approximately 2,000 students while Monterey is just under 11,000. Monterey

is more diverse than the Ranchos with 42 percent of the students Hispanic, 11 percent African American and 29 percent white, housed in 19 different schools. Officials there have identified 44 different languages being spoken in their community and over 54 percent of the students in the Monterey Peninsula Unified School District are on the free and reduced lunch program.

Such a larger school district will also have more employees and more administrative duties. Monterey Peninsula Unified School District employs 621 certificated and 581 classified staff members under a general budget of approximately \$87 million. Unlike Golden Valley, Monterey Peninsula Unified School District has faced declining enrollment for the past five years, however new residential and commercial developments in the area are anticipated enrollment growth.

"I feel very fortunate to have been the Superintendent here," Shepherd said, "but after a lot of thought - and a lot of prayer - I'm very peaceful with the decision."

Shepherd said that she'll be leaving sometime in February and will help getting an interim



Dr. Marilyn Shepherd, GVUSD Superintendent

Superintendent set up before she goes. "There should be a lot of applicants," she said confidently.

Seven Board members from Monterey Peninsula paid a one-day visit to the Ranchos on Tuesday, Dec. 12 and interviewed parents, teachers and administrators. In an article printed Wednesday, Dec. 13 in the Mercury County Herald, MPUSD board president Alan Haffa referred to the meeting as "... a successful site visit in Madera," and said the trustees hoped to have someone in place as soon as possible.

"I've always lived in the Valley, but this is interesting," Shepherd said about the prospects of moving to a larger school district - particularly one situated in Monterey, Calif.

Grinch Strikes Ranchos: Community Tree Stolen

Not long after Santa Claus arrived in the Ranchos to kick off the Christmas season at the Community Tree Lighting on Friday, Dec. 1, approximately one week later the Grinch showed up and stole the Community tree all the way down to the last light, ornament and tinsel.

"We're probably not going to do this anymore," said a dejected Ollia Ridge, President of the Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce, sponsor of the Community Christmas Tree and the lighting ceremony. "They took all of our lights and decorations."

Chamber Secretary and Treasurer Virginia Vick filed a police report with the Madera County Sheriff's Department but expects little to happen.

"You know, if someone really needed a tree there are people out here who would get a tree for

a needy family," Vick said. "Now they've taken it from the entire community."

The tree was taken sometime during the weekend of Dec. 9-10 and no one saw anything.

If anyone knows something about the disappearance of the community's tree, call the Sheriff's Department at 675-7770 or the Golden Valley Chamber at 645-0634.

Bigelow Elected President of Statewide Organization

At 112th Annual Meeting, Bigelow Becomes First CSAC President Ever From Madera County

The California State Association of Counties (CSAC) elected Madera County Supervisor Frank Bigelow as President at the association's 112th Annual Meeting, held in Orange County during the last week of November.

Bigelow will serve as the organization's President for the coming year. He is the first CSAC president from Madera County in the association's 112-year history. Also elected were San Mateo County Supervisor Rich Gordon as First Vice President and Imperial County Supervisor Gary Wyatt as Second Vice President.

"It is both an honor and a privilege to have been chosen by my colleagues, throughout the state, to lead California's Counties" said Bigelow. "The next year will bring some new and exciting challenges that are sure to have significant impacts to not only Madera County, but each and every County in California. As President, I look forward to addressing those concerns with a strong and united voice for each of the 58 Counties."

Bigelow has served as a CSAC officer

for the past two years, including holding the post of First Vice President in 2006. He has also served on the CSAC Executive Committee and chaired the CSAC Housing, Land Use and Transportation Policy Committee in 2004. CSAC is a nonprofit corporation that promotes the interests of California's 58 counties at the state and federal level. One of the association's primary goals is to educate the public about the value and necessity for county programs and services. Founded in 1895, CSAC is based in Sacramento.

Bigelow is a cattle rancher in Eastern Madera County where he operates a ranch that was started by his great grandfather in the mid 1800's. Bigelow continues to serve as a volunteer firefighter and participates in several other volunteer roles in the community. He was elected to the Madera County Board of Supervisors in 1998 and will begin his third term in office in January of 2007.

Bigelow's wife, Barbara Bigelow, swore in the 2007 CSAC officers on November 30. The association's Constitution and Bylaws

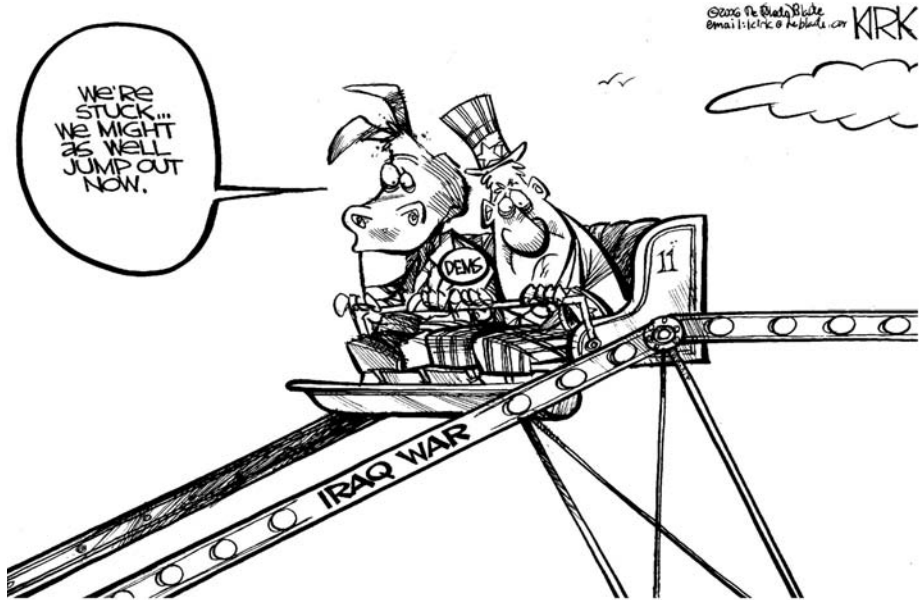
mandate that each year the Presidency rotate from an urban to a suburban, and then to a rural county supervisor. Bigelow represents rural counties, while Gordon and Wyatt represent urban and suburban counties, respectively.



District 1 Supervisor Frank Bigelow made history by being the first president elected from Madera County in the 112 year history of the California State Association of Counties.

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Editorial

Happy Anniversary ... to Us

And they said it wouldn't last.

This issue marks the second anniversary of my association with the Ranchos Independent. It was in December of 2004 that I wrote my first article for this little paper and the rest, as they say, is history.

In the last two years I've gotten to write about some amazing stuff. From mysterious dog hangings to Governor Schwarzenegger; from elections to a near perfect football season; from child predators to a dog that saved a family from certain death in a house fire. Simply amazing.

Through it all I've tried consistently to keep one goal firmly in mind: The Ranchos. The number one question I ask when I look for stories is, "How does it involve the Ranchos?" Let's be honest here. This is NOT the New York Times or the San Francisco Chronicle. This is even a far, far cry from the Fresno Bee. This little paper only comes out once a month so it makes it very hard to be as timely as a daily paper. If an event happens the day after your Ranchos Independent arrives in the mail, it's a month from now before you'll hear about it in these pages. The balancing act between being timely and being a history book can get a little vague at times. I try to look at something and determine if it's something that, even though it may of happened a while back, did everyone hear about it? Is it something that could affect us out here in the Ranchos, regardless of *when* we hear about it? More often than not, I look at something and ask whether or not *I'm* still interested in it and then, since I'm pretty much an average Joe kind of guy, assume that the rest of my community would be interested in it as well.

Not very scientific, but there it is.

One of the things that I have prided myself on these last two years is being fair and balanced. Now don't get me wrong; I have opinions. People will tell you that those are quite often *strong* opinions. One of my concerns when I took over the paper was how my opinions would mesh with straight news reporting. Well, let me tell you - I pride myself on doing a pretty good job the last two years of travelling right down the middle of the road on the news stories I've written for this little paper. If you want my opinions, they've always been available here, on the editorial page. For the rest of the paper I've always thought it was best if I just gave you both sides and then let you decide. Sounds kind of catchy, doesn't it?

As fair as that sounds, I have discovered that you simply can't please all the people all the time. Believe it or not, there are people out there in our community that think I don't have the Ranchos' best interests at heart, or that I'm on some sort of personal vendetta against them or some project of theirs. Nothing could be further from the truth - but they seem to have made their minds up.

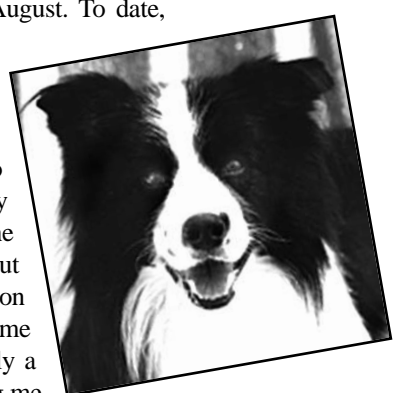
Oh well.

The one thing that I have pretty steadily beat on the drum for the last two years is that eventually this area is going to grow. That's a fact and there's not a whole lot we can do about it ... except for one thing: We can have a say in *how* it grows and in *which direction* it grows. For those of you who enjoy the view from having your head under the sand, don't be surprised when you pull your head out and look around and don't like what you see. Oops, there I go not sounding good for the Ranchos again.

Thanks for the last two years. Let's see if we can do a couple more.

Random Notes

Over the course of the last 12 months we've covered a bunch of stories, but none as strange as the dog hanging back in late July/early August. To date, absolutely no leads have surfaced. I ran into Sheriff Anderson at Cat's Diner the other day and asked him if anything else had turned up on the investigation and he said it was at a complete dead end. He went as far as suggesting that the Sheriff's Department wanted to return the several thousands of dollars in reward money that had been donated because everything related to the investigation was stone cold. Bizarre. Everything about that case was just bizarre. I still stand by the one question I asked a few issues ago: Where's the owner? How come NOBODY ever came looking for what was obviously a well-taken-care-of family pet? This one is going to bug me for a long time.



Since we're talking about follow-ups, remember that ordeal about the signs between Fernwood Nursery and CM&N Nursery? Charles and Mona Diaz of Fernwood Nursery were accused of destroying "Tree for Sale" signs that were illegally posted on power poles around Avenue 12. They were taken to small claims court by John Finley of CM&N and the judge ruled that they had to pay \$658 out of Finley's original claim of \$5,000 for damaged signs. Well, the Diaz's appealed the ruling and were scheduled to go back to court Dec. 8 when they discovered Finley had signed off on the claim without receiving one cent. I contacted Finley who said the court time conflicted with a trip he had planned to fish for Marlin in Mexico and he wasn't about to give up his trip for a day in court. He said he was never interested in the money anyway; it was the principle of the thing. All's well that ends well?

The January "Coffee with the Superintendent" has been cancelled but will be back on Feb. 1. Let's see if the next Superintendent likes coffee or not; more importantly, let's see if the next Superintendent likes meeting with constituents or not. Speaking of the Golden Valley School District, there is a real hornet's nest starting to stir up around the Ranchos. When you were a kid, when did you go back to school each year? I know that without exception I always began school AFTER the Labor Day weekend. It was always in September. September was when the new school year always began. A few years back, my kids started school during one of the last weeks of August. It only missed Labor Day by a week or so, so I didn't think too much about it. This last year, my kids started school on August 10. You know - the middle of the hottest month of summer? Now word has leaked out that the latest draft (and yes, it's JUST a draft - not carved in stone by any stretch of the imagination) of the contract for the teachers of GVUSD calls for school to begin August 6! Gee, why not just have a 4th of July/First Day of School party? I know - how about a Father's Day/First Day of School in June? I have received more than a few emails from concerned parents who are unhappy with the loss of family time in the summer that these ever-receding starting dates incur. If there are enough parents out there who are concerned, we can start a petition, we can go to school board meetings, we can let our voices be known. I'm willing to volunteer the Ranchos Independent office for a meeting place if I hear from enough people. If I don't,



I'll assume I'm the only one confused about summer school that begins in spring and regular school that begins in summer. I'd just like to say that I'm going to miss Dr. Shepherd. She was always completely open with me about what was going on in the School District and if I had questions about things that were going on she would answer them or direct me to someone who could get me an answer. And the best part of it was that she had a sense of humor. I've been around administrative types that if they accidentally sat on a charcoal briquette you'd find a 5-carat diamond when they stood up. I am not looking forward to getting a replacement like that, which brings up another point. It's our newly elected Board plus the other members who are going to decide on our next Superintendent. We need to let them know what we are looking for and what we will and won't accept. The ONLY way they can know that is if WE let them know. Sounds like someone just might have to get off the couch ...

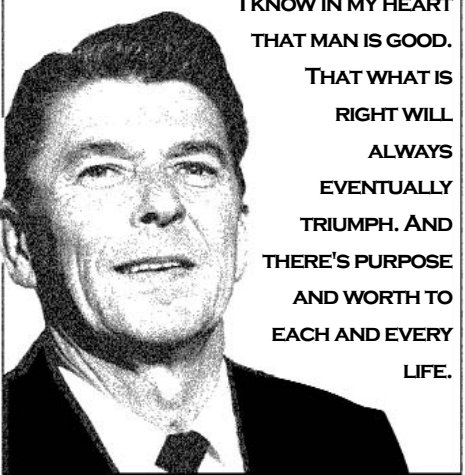
The Ranchos Independent

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THE RAY GUN



I KNOW IN MY HEART THAT MAN IS GOOD. THAT WHAT IS RIGHT WILL ALWAYS EVENTUALLY TRIUMPH. AND THERE'S PURPOSE AND WORTH TO EACH AND EVERY LIFE.

RONALD REAGAN

The Olde Cowboy

By Woody Laughnan

On the occasion of her 60th birthday, the kids and grandkids went together to buy the missus a beauty saloon make-over, I mean the works, and it must have set them back plenty because four or five different beauticians and what-nots worked on her all afternoon while I sat across the street waiting for her in one of those chain coffee shops that leaves you burping and passing gas for two or three days.

I've grown to hate beauty shop day in Madera. For one thing she won't let me drive her there in my pickup because she says it has a barnyard smell and people will know we're from the country. And I'm not allowed to wait for her on the beauty shop side of the street because she says I smell worse than the pickup.

For years she drove her own car to town on beauty shop day, but she won't do that anymore because she says that traffic is too heavy and there are so many fool-hardy people trying to drive and talk on the telephone at the same time, applying makeup or their attention on studying their good looks in the mirror rather than the road. Either they're doing disruptive things like this or reaching back into the rear of their SUV trying to stop fight among her kids. It's gotten so that about the only places she'll drive is to the neighbor's place and the mailbox.

What all was included in the beauty care package they bought her? I mean besides a massage by a young male masseuse, which incidentally she must have enjoyed immensely because the other day she scolded me saying I never in my life touched her body so tenderly. And you can bet however much is in your wallet that I don't even try anymore because when I do she belittles men for having only one thing on their mind, and admonishing: "Quit trying to maul me!"

The package included a tanning procedure of some kind, a hot tub treatment in water smelling of incense, fragrant oils and perfumes from the four corners of the world and I do not know what all. Then there came eye lash extension, microdermabrasion which I understand is a treatment that in the olden days was done by laying the hair out on a tablecloth and applying a hot flat iron to straighten it. And following that procedure was a Parisian hair arrangement preparatory to "great length hair extension" so long that she looked like an elderly Lady Godiva and had to hold the ends in her hands on the way home to keep from sitting on them.

And then came the *coup de maitre* as the French call it, which in English is "body sugaring."

Anyhow, the upshot to the episode was that on arriving home she spent the dwindling remains of the afternoon parading in front of the old full-length mirror in the hall. Just before dusk she went out into the yard and that was a mistake. The chickens took one look at her with hair flowing to the ground, and smelling of incense, perfume, oils and whatnots from the four corners of the world, and ran squawking into the coop.

And the old gobbler, more or less the lord and master of the barnyard, after one look, ruffled up, gobbled fiercely and chased her back into the house.

And oh yes, if you are wondering what the "body sugaring" process was all about, I can't help you there. I tried to lick her during the night to find out but she awoke and kneed me so hard in an area that has, for the present at least, changed my voice to falsetto.

Letters

Dear Editor:

On behalf of the Kiwanis Club of the Madera Ranchos and the Webster Parent Teacher Club (WPTC), I would like to extend a great big thank you to the business owners of our community. Recently, WPTC did a community food drive and the majority of our business owners stepped up to the plate -- along with our parents, students and staff of Webster School -- with their much needed donations, making this food drive once again a very successful one. Thank you Dr. Matthew Pia, Ranchos Dental, for going above and beyond our request for the food drive.

Although every business owner can't be listed individually, each of you (and the community) knows who you are, and a great big "thanks" goes out to you all for all of your support in the past and present and hope for your support in the future.

From the Kiwanis Club of the Ranchos, thanks to the following businesses for their never ending support of our club and the community: Jerry Eddings Realtors; Ranchos Dental; Pizza Factory; Continental Realty; Hurst Hardware; Ranchos Auto Repair; Velvet Touch Car Wash; Family A Auto Sales and all of our Ranchos Kiwanis Club business owners who continually support our club and the community.

Final thought: How does such a small business community have such big hearts? Please know, that it is not expected for our businesses to contribute every time they are asked, but when they do, it is greatly appreciated and I think I speak for the whole community.

Again, thank you,

Linda Bresee, President, Ranchos Kiwanis Club

Dear Editor:

It has come to my attention that many of you are upset that folks are taking My name out of the season. Maybe you've forgotten that I wasn't actually born during this time of the year and that it was some of your predecessors who decided to celebrate My birthday on what was actually a time of pagan festival. Although I do appreciate being remembered anytime, how I personally feel about this celebration can probably be most easily understood by those of you who have been blessed with children of your own. I don't care what you call the day. If you want to celebrate My birth, just get along and love one another.

Now, having said that, let Me go on. If it bothers you that the town in which you live doesn't allow a scene depicting My birth, then just get rid of a couple of Santas and snowmen and put in a small Nativity scene on your own front lawn. If all My followers did that there wouldn't be any need for such a scene on the town square because there would be many of them all around town.

Stop worrying about the fact that people are calling the tree a holiday tree, instead of a Christmas tree. It was I who made all trees. You can remember Me anytime you see any tree. Decorate a grape vine if you wish: I actually spoke of that one in a teaching, explaining who I am in relation to you and what each of our tasks were. If you have forgotten that one, look up John 15: 1-8.

If you want to give Me a present in remembrance of My birth here is my wish list. Choose something from it:

1. Instead of writing protest letters objecting to the way My birthday is being celebrated, write letters of love and hope to

Please see **LETTERS** Page 6

*Sunday dinner. Roasted turkey.
Freshly baked pies sitting on the windowsill ...*

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The Bookshelf

Bright Lights and Fun at Library

By Ellen Mester

Holiday time is here! The Library is decorated and bright lights adorn the windows. We have over 100 Christmas picture books to choose from, several wonderful classic Christmas movies, and Christmas music CD's that will get you in the holiday spirit. And we always have the latest best-selling novels and non-fiction books available for check-out. So relax and kick back with a good book.

The Friends of the Ranchos Library Christmas Book Sale was quite successful ... a big thank you to all the volunteers who worked hard to bring it all together.

The Christmas party at the Ranchos Library was especially nice this year. We had live music with flutist, Jules Mester and pianist Breana Kent. They played beautiful Christmas carols while the children decorated the tree and the adults enjoyed feasting on tasty treats.

The Friends of the Ranchos Library Christmas Book Sale was quite successful. Many people purchased recently released bestsellers, children's books and some of the classic science fiction that are hard to find. The sale was held in the vacant office space in the Maywood Center. Everyone enjoyed shopping in warm, comfortable surroundings, thanks to our gracious landlord, Ed Ajlouny. And also a big thank you to all the volunteers who worked hard to bring it all together. Remember, we always have books for sale in the Friends Book Sale room in the library, and at the www.librarybooksales.org website.

The New Library Planning Committee is off to a great start. Chairman Mark Swan, Vice Chairman Steve Bibler, Secretary Julie Hale, and Treasurer Cheryl Harvat were elected at the last meeting. Sub-committees were formed to gather information regarding the Library Bond Act, possible grants, the history of the Ranchos, putting together a needs assessment, architecture, and land acquisition. Our next meeting is scheduled for Jan. 10, 2007 at 7 p.m. at the Ranchos Library. Everyone is welcome!

Book Recommendations

Adult fiction: *Ordinary Heroes* written by Scott Turow. While sorting through his father's papers after his death, Stewart Dubinsky discovers the World War II stories his father kept secret for decades. His father, David Dubin, had Americanized his Polish name before entering Easton College.

After law school he enlisted in the U.S. Army and became a JAG officer. All of this, Stewart was familiar with, but when he found letters written to an unknown fiancé, and a journal chronicling his court martial, Stewart knew he had to investigate to find the true war story. David Dubin had orders to arrest Robert

Martin, a rogue OSS officer. In the process he ends up becoming involved with the French Resistance and participating in the Battle of the Bulge. As Stewart pieces together the events that brought his father to the point of a court martial, he begins to understand the man he never really knew and the difficult choices he faced during a time of war. This book not only gives an exciting account of a famous battle during WWII, but also the complexity of relationships between father and son, soldier and commanding officer, husband and wife, and between a man and his conscience. It's an excellent read for a cold night by a warm fire.

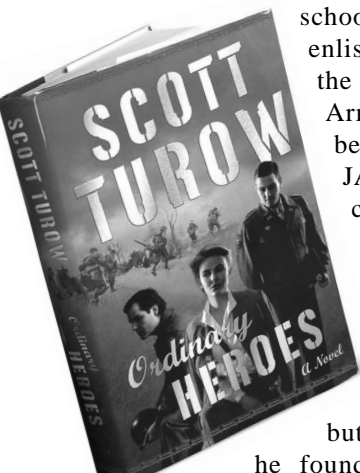
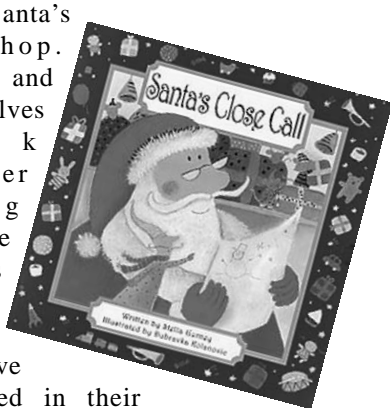
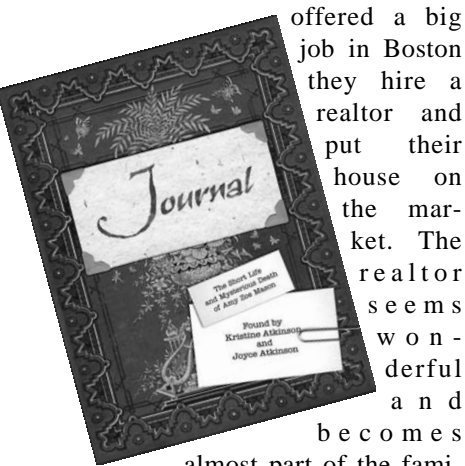
Young Adult Fiction: *Journal: the Short Life and Mysterious Death of Amy Zoe Mason* by Kristine and Joyce Atkinson. This is an interesting but disturbing book. It begins with the seemingly mundane life of Amy Mason who is married to a doctor. When he is

offered a big job in Boston they hire a realtor and put their house on the market. The realtor seems wonderful and becomes almost part of the family. They trust her explicitly until small unusual things happen. What is so fascinating about this book is the way it is written—like a scrapbook with notes added. It has a really personal feel to it which makes the story more powerful and disturbing. The title gives away the ending right from the start but seeing it unfold is almost painful. This book was recommended by several patrons. The whole book can be read in 40 minutes and although it is fiction it feels chillingly real.

Juvenile Picture Book: *Santa's Close Call* by Stella Gurney. Work is progressing smoothly up at Santa's workshop.

Santa and the elves work together making all the toys that children have requested in their letters to Santa. Occasionally, Santa will misplace his glasses and then all work stops while everyone searches for them. One evening just as they are making the last toys before Christmas eve, Santa once again misplaces his glasses and misreads a letter from little Joe who had asked for a toy truck. Santa thinks he is asking for a toy duck. Unfortunately he doesn't find his mistake until after he has delivered all the presents to the children. Santa saves the situation in a way that only Santa could. This delightful story might help all of us understand why we don't always get what we want for Christmas!

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



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LETTERS continued from Page 3

soldiers away from home. They are terribly afraid and lonely this time of year. I know, they tell Me all the time.

2. Visit someone in a nursing home. You don't have to know them personally. They just need to know that someone cares about them.

3. Instead of writing George complaining about the wording on the cards his staff sent out this year, why don't you write and tell him that you'll be praying for him and his family this year. Then follow up. It will be nice hearing from you again.

4. Instead of giving your children a lot of gifts you can't afford and they don't need, spend time with them. Tell them the story of My birth, and why I came to live with you down here. Hold them in your arms and remind them that I love them.

5. Pick someone that has hurt you in the past and forgive him or her.

6. Did you know that someone in your town will attempt to take their own life this season because they feel so alone and hopeless? Since you don't know who that person is, try giving everyone you meet a warm smile; it could make the difference.

7. Instead of nit picking about what the retailer in your town calls the holiday, be patient with the people who work there. Give them a warm smile and a kind word. Even if they aren't allowed to wish you a "Merry Christmas" that doesn't keep you from wishing them one. Then stop shopping there on Sunday. If the store didn't make so much money on that day they'd close and let their employees spend the day at home with their families

8. If you really want to make a difference, support a missionary -- especially one who takes My love and Good News to those who have never heard My name.

9. Here's a good one. There are individuals and whole families in your town who not only will have no "Christmas" tree, but neither will they have any presents to give or receive. If you don't know them, buy some food and a few gifts and give them to the Salvation Army or some other charity which believes in Me and they will make the delivery for you.

10. Finally, if you want to make a statement about your belief in and loyalty to Me, then behave like a Christian. Don't do things in secret that you wouldn't do in My presence. Let people know by your actions that you are one of mine.

Don't forget; I am God and can take care of Myself. Just love Me and do what I have told you to do. I'll take care of all the rest. Check out the list above and get to work; time is short. I'll help you, but the ball is now in your court. And do have a

most blessed Christmas with all those whom you love and remember.

I love you,

Jesus

Dear Editor:

Just received our energy survey results [from PG&E]. Not very helpful! First of all, our hot tub increased our bill about \$15 per month and it is nearly off "in summer mode" for three months, hardly \$819/year.

Our water heater is propane, not 15% of our electric bill!

The house is only 1,600 square feet with energy efficient appliances, and only two "energy conscious" residents.

The main reason our bill is approaching nearly \$500 per month is that [PG&E's] rate structure discriminates against customers on private water wells. We have the same lifeline allowance as those on public water systems. Also, having to pay the costs of inaccurate surveys, trimming of trees under power lines (that should be the responsibility of the customer), assisting low-income customers and supporting rebates doesn't help either.

I contacted the PUC during [PG&E's] last rate hearings to no avail. As I was unable to attend and my county supervisor (whose constituents are mostly on private wells) refused my offer to attend in my absence, this perspective was not effectively represented.

We are doing our part to conserve, now something needs to be done on [PG&E's] part.

WE ARE TRYING AND WE NEED RELIEF!

Don Helms,
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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8	2	6	3	9	7	1	4	5
4	7	9	1	5	8	2	6	3
7	5	4	2	3	9	6	1	8
6	8	3	7	4	1	5	2	9
2	9	1	6	8	5	7	3	4
9	3	8	5	1	6	4	7	2
1	4	2	9	7	3	8	5	6
5	6	7	8	2	4	3	9	1

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12/06

The Stock Report

New Members as New Year Looms

By Audrey Stock

Hi neighbors,
At the Dec. 12 school board meeting we said goodbye to our fearless leader, Board President Mark Huddleston. I want to publicly thank Mark for the positive "CAN DO" attitude that he has used to lead the school board. I am so proud of Mark and I treasure his friendship. He is a great guy! He has been a strong leader through the many ups and downs of the six years of his dedicated service as Board President on the Golden Valley Unified School Board. Mark is a founding board member and for the first two years on the board we were all helping to set the foundation for the strong district that Golden Valley Unified has become. For those first two years we were all learning what a school board does and how it functions if you want to get things done. Mark learned these lessons well and used them to become the strong Board President he has become. We will miss you Mark!

Gateway Village's plan would produce about 4,182 students. Where will these students go to school, what grade configurations should these schools have, and how many students we want in these schools are some of the very important questions that this committee will be working on.

The Dec. 12 board meeting was the time that Mona Diaz, Roger Schuh and Steven Lewis were given the swearing in ceremony for their four year term. I am glad that both Mona and Roger are returning to the board. I want to welcome Steven Lewis to the full board. Steven has been setting with the board but not on the board since North Bonadelle area joined Golden Valley Unified, so he is not a stranger to us. We enjoyed having Steven join us in San Francisco for the California School Boards Association conference. It is an eye opener conference.

Also at the Dec. 12 meeting, board members conducted their annual organizational meeting to:

- Elect a President
- Elect a Clerk
- Designate the Superintendent as the Secretary to the Board
- Designate Board representatives for:
 1. Executive Board of the Madera County School Boards Association.
 2. Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce.
 3. California School Board (CSBA) and Small School Districts Association (SSDA) Legislative Network.

The Golden Valley Unified Citizens Facilities Advisory Committee has met twice and I have been present at each meeting. There seems to be a good mix of community members present. These people have a big job and only until March to complete it. If you were at either of the Castle and Cooke presentation at Liberty High library on Oct. 29 or the presentation before the Madera Planning Commission at the California Children's Hospital on Dec. 7, you heard that Gateway Village's plan would produce about 4,182 students. Where will these students go to school, what grade configurations should these schools have, and how many students we want in these schools are some of the very important questions that this committee will be working on. If Golden Valley Unified wants to continue to be a high quality school district we need to make

good decisions as growth occurs. We have to make them now.

There is another new group of community citizens that are planning a new Ranchos Library building. This committee will be separate from the "Friends of the Library." They are looking for property; grant funding, architecture and design for the new Ranchos Library that they are planning. Mark Swan has been elected Chairman to head this committee. They have room for members, if you are interested. Call Ranchos Library 645-1214.

The other committee that would like to see more members attending meetings is the Foundation for Golden Valley Schools. President Ron says these meetings are held the first Wednesday of each month. There is a need for more people with ideas and to help put together the various events to raise money for our schools. I was asked to be the historian for the foundation. I'll at least get the book started so that 10 or 20 years from now someone can look back and see what we did and how we did it. Come on people we need you!

Your school board members and Superintendent Marilyn Shepherd attended the California School Boards Association annual conference in San Francisco. I have gone to five of these conferences and always come back with great ideas. It is a great place to connect with school board members all over California. I was able to crawl through a new school bus, which we will need if Castle and Cooke start building soon. One of the most exciting workshops that I attended was called "Transforming Math Educating with M&M". This would use a Math Lab to teach math by using music. This is a program that starts in the first grade through the 5th grade. The company is putting together a 6th grade pre-algebra program as I write this. This program requires piano keyboards, computers and an Internet connection. Some Golden

As we think about putting in the new stadium at Liberty High, synthetic turf may be the way to go. No water, mowing, seeding or fertilizing. What do you think?

Valley students are struggling with math. Research shows that there is a connection between music and math for all children. English language learners and Special Ed students both did well in this program. If it would help our students it would be worth the expense.

There were several different synthetic turf system companies. As we think about putting in the new stadium at Liberty High, synthetic turf may be the way to go. No water, mowing, seeding or fertilizing. What do you think?

Another venter that I found interesting was selling surround sound systems for the classroom. Since a new middle school is in our near future, if we could wire for this when we build it would be less expensive to install. Students at the back of the room would hear the same thing as the students at the front of the room.

The Christmas break is here for the teachers and students. Christmas is an exciting time for students, teachers, administrators and all district personal. God bless you all and keep you safe over this holiday season. I expect to see you all back Jan. 8, 2007, rested and ready to give it your all until the end of this school year.

The next school board meeting will be at Liberty High library at 6 p.m. on Jan. 16, 2007. See you there to start the New Year.

Christmas Trees: A Short Course

To some, Christmas just isn't Christmas without a real Christmas tree. The following are a few hints to help you select that perfect tree, how to keep it fresher longer and then how to properly dispose of it after Santa makes his visit.

Selection and Placement

Decide on where you will place the tree. Will it be seen from all sides or will some of it be up against a wall? Be sure to choose a spot away from heat sources, such as TVs, fireplaces, heaters and air ducts. Place the tree clear of doors.

Measure the height and width of the space you have available in the room where the tree will be placed. There is nothing worse than bringing a tree indoors only to find it's too tall. Take a tape measure with you to measure your chosen tree and bring a cord to tie your tree to the car.

Remember that trees sold on retail lots in urban areas may have come from out of state and may have been exposed to drying winds in transit. They may have been cut weeks earlier. Buy trees early before the best trees have been sold and where trees are shaded. Ask the retailer whether his trees are delivered once at the beginning of the season or are they delivered at different times during the selling season.

Choose a fresh tree. A fresh tree will have a healthy green appearance with few browning needles. Needles should be flexible and not fall off if you run a branch through your hand. Raise the tree a few inches off the ground and drop it on the butt end. Very few green needles should drop off the tree. It is normal for a few inner brown needles to drop off.

Remember to choose a tree that fits where it is to be displayed. For example if the tree is displayed in front of a large window, then all four sides should look as good as possible. If the tree is displayed against a wall, then a tree with three good sides would be okay. A tree with two good sides would work well in a corner. The more perfect a tree, the more expensive it is.

Make sure the "handle," or base, of the tree is straight and 6-8 inches long so it will fit easily into the stand.

Do a little research on different Christmas tree types. Some Christmas tree varieties will hold needles longer than others.

Making it Last

The following are a few tips on how to keep your tree fresh throughout the holiday season.

If you are not putting the tree up right away store it in an unheated garage or some other area out of the wind and freezing temperatures. Make a fresh 1-inch cut on the butt end and place the tree in a bucket of warm water.

When you decide to bring the tree indoors, make another fresh 1-inch cut and place the tree in a sturdy stand that holds at least one gallon of water, or a rule of thumb is one quart of water for every inch of diameter of the trunk.

Be sure to keep the water level about the base of the tree. If the base dries out resin will form over the cut end and the tree will not be able to absorb water and will dry out quickly. Commercially prepared mixes; aspirin; sugar and other additives added to the water are not necessary. Research has shown that plain water will keep a tree fresh.

Check all Christmas tree lights for worn electrical cords. Use UL approved electrical decorations and cords. Unplug tree lights at night.

Miniature lights produce less heat and reduce the drying effect on the tree.

It's a nuisance to water a Christmas tree once it's decorated with a tree skirt and surrounded by presents. Here's an easy solution: Buy a funnel and a 3- to 4-foot length of vinyl tubing to slip over the funnel outlet. Fasten the funnel/tube with a twist-tie or twine in an out-of-the-way but reachable part of the tree. Extend the tubing down the tree trunk and into the tree stand reservoir. Now you can water the tree through the funnel without bending over or disturbing the tree skirt or its ornaments.

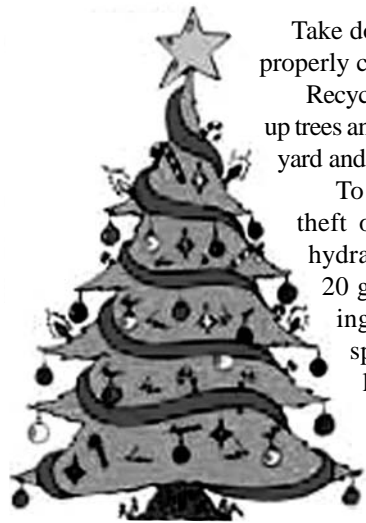
Removal and Disposal

Take down the tree before it dries out. Many fresh cut trees if properly cared for will last at least five weeks before drying out.

Recycle your tree after Christmas. Many communities will pick up trees and turn them into chips. You might put the tree in your back yard and place bread and suet among the branches for the birds.

To "uglify" live evergreens in your yard to protect from theft or vandalism, try the following: Mix 20 ounces of hydrated lime and 4 ounces of WiltPruf into a paste. Add 20 gallons of warm water and two bottles of food coloring to the paste. Apply to evergreens with a garden hand sprayer or with a broom and bucket. Treatment should last through the holiday season.

This timely information comes courtesy of the University of Illinois Cooperative Education department.



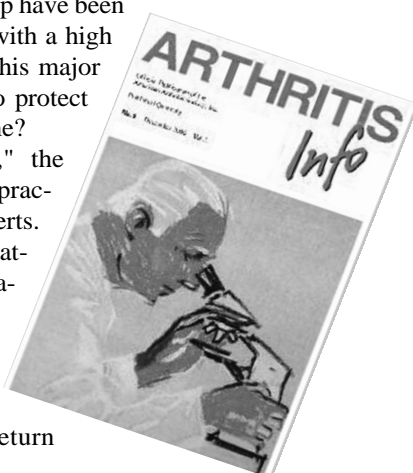
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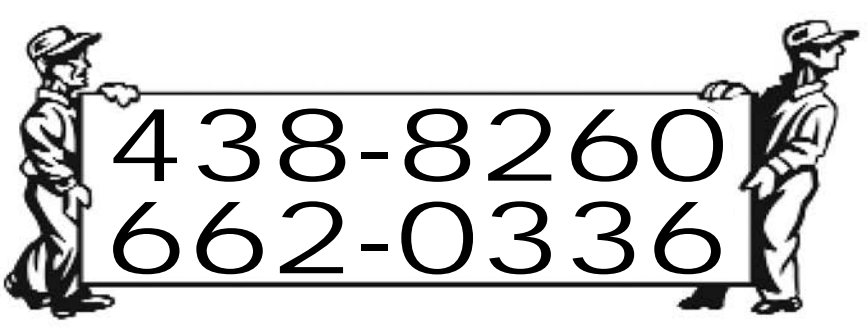
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Chamber Event Lights Up Ranchos

On a cold Friday night, Dec. 1, the Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce again flipped the switch on the community Christmas tree at the annual tree lighting ceremony at Maywood Center.

Honorary tree lighter Mervyn Vick flipped the switch in the cold evening air and official opened Christmas season for the businesses in the Madera Ranchos.



Musicians/singers from Flipside Church provided plenty of Christmas spirit with their traditional and modern carols.



The main reason you have a tree lighting ... the tree!



The man of the hour arrives via a Station 19 fire engine.



Goodies and more goodies and it's not even Christmas yet!

Moments after the tree was lit, a procession of emergency vehicles with lights flashing entered the shopping center with the man of the hour, Santa Claus, riding in a fire engine from Station 19. The jolly old elf scrambled out of the fire engine to the delight of the children and set up shop finding out who was naughty (no one) and who was nice (everyone) and then took some requests for Christmas day.



The Friends of the Ranchos Library had a Christmas Book Sale during the event that was quite successful.

Christmas carols were provided by local girl scouts and singers from Flipside Church.

Cookies, coffee and cider provided by the Chamber flowed freely throughout the event.



Local Girl Scout troops sang Christmas carols for the crowd.



Carolyn Bailey (left) and Kirstie White make a cookie selection.



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12/06

Holiday Shopping Do's and Don'ts

By Stephanie Davis

Are you a good "gifter"? Do you instinctively know what that certain someone wants? If you do, this article is *not* for you. If you're confused about what to get someone (or more importantly, what *not* to get someone) then read on.

Worst Gifts for Women

1. Anything she needs instead of wants

Just because she needs new running shoes, hand lotion, or a frying pan isn't your invitation to replace it. Quick lesson: Women are good at taking care of details, and when their desire for a whatever-it-is gets dire, they'll replace it, pronto.

It's sweet to show you were listening, but that said, women never swoon over practical gifts. "I always complained that I never have enough quarters for the laundromat," says Kristine Janik of New York City. "Then my boyfriend gave me \$40 in quarters, which was really odd. Sweet sentiment, yes, but might be a better gift for a random weekday, not a major couples' holiday."

2. Awful flowers

We applaud men for realizing that women really do go gaga over flowers, but it's crucial to realize the difference between good flowers and bad. "One Christmas, a guy I was dating pulled flowers for me out of the back seat of his car," says Julie Vreeland of Atlanta. "It was a table arrangement - round, with holly and glittery branches sticking out of it and a wooden church scene stuck on top." Cute if she's decorating her grandmother's foyer, not so cute if that's your grand present.

She's not alone in suffering through a bouquet gone bad. "I got fake roses one year with a card that read: 'My love for you is everlasting, just like these flowers!'" says Lindsay Wenner of Minneapolis. "I was dumbfounded." Here's a tip: When in doubt, ask a female florist to suggest something appropriate. She will not do you wrong.

3. Sports paraphernalia

Sure, your girl may love watching the finals with you or root for her alma mater, but that's no excuse to forget your A-game when it comes to gift-giving. "I once got an Auburn jersey from my now-husband,"

says Amy Buck of Atlanta.

Aside from the fact that no one should wear a jersey past high school graduation, unless she's an uber-fan and you're shelling out for season box seats, you'll find nothing appropriate for her at the pro shop.

4. The sparkly stuff

Women definitely love jewelry, but it's such a big item that it really needs to match their style. And due to its, well, connotations, it shouldn't be given too soon in the relationship. So make both of you happy by staying away from this option unless you've been dating for at least a year and she's pointed out a specific item she likes (you'd be surprised how many women won't wear, say, gold).

"A guy I had been seeing for only a few months gave me a diamond cross necklace," says Amanda Pressner of Tampa, Florida. "We hadn't been dating that long, so it made me think he was getting too serious. Plus, I'm not that religious, so I felt like he didn't even know me."

5. A card that you've signed in front of her

Guys, when you're giving a woman a card to go with any gift, don't sign it right in front of her and then hand it to her. Find time when you're not together - even if it's in the car a few seconds before you meet her - to write something sweet.

Worst Gifts for Men

1. Clothes for a better version of him

Getting a guy a piece of clothing is sweet, but when it's not his style at all, it's actually a not-so-subtle hint that you don't like what he's wearing.

"I'm a vintage-shopping type," says Mark Gantt of Los Angeles. "Getting something from Gap one holiday came across as an insult."

Or, foisting something more formal on a man can send more than a "you need fashion help and bad" message. It can make him feel as if you're wishing he earned more or led a more debonair lifestyle ... not exactly what's going to put the ho-ho-ho in his holiday.

2. The saccharine stuff

While women always enjoy the lovey-dovey, men are often scared off by

Please see DO'S on Page 12

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Madera County Check Fraud Ring Suspected in Arrest of Threesome

Three people are behind bars – believed to be part of a check fraud ring – that prompted a multi-county investigation involving at least five different law enforcement agencies.

On Wednesday, Dec. 13 the Chowchilla Police Department took 26-year old Charles Rohrs of Madera into custody, then, arrested a Chowchilla couple, Daniel Moore, 30, and Laura Moore, 30, on Thursday, Dec. 14. All three suspects are believed to be a part of a check fraud scheme that has been targeting merchants in the cities of Chowchilla, Madera and even Fresno.

With bail set at \$500,000 each for Daniel Moore and his wife Laura, and \$15,000 for Charles Rohrs, all three remain behind bars at this hour.

The investigation into the check fraud scheme began nearly a month ago when at least two store fronts cashed what they thought were bona fide county checks only to later find out they had been forged.

Since November, more merchants have fallen prey and although Sheriff John Anderson was extremely happy to learn about the arrests, he has been advised that there are still more suspects and he therefore fears that that means there will be more victims.



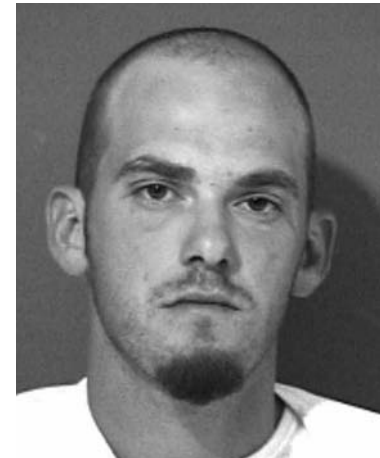
Husband and wife Daniel and Laura Moore are being held on suspicion of forging and passing Madera County checks throughout Madera County.

“Anyone who may have unwittingly cashed a phony check or who may have information about the individuals behind the scheme, we urge you to come forward and notify your local authorities.”

Anderson also cautioned merchants. “If you are handed a county check, we urge you to call Madera County before cashing it to find out if that check is valid.”

In addition, authorities also say that if someone tries to cash a check during the weekend when banks and government offices are closed, “... if a check looks remotely suspicious, err on the side of caution.” Authorities say it's better to be safe than sorry and strongly advise against cashing the check.

The investigation began in November when the Madera County Treasurer's office issued a press release warning the public about cashing phony checks. At that time at least two stores had been hit, one in Madera and the second in Chowchilla.



Charles Rohrs of Madera is also alleged to figure into the forged check scheme and is being held on \$15,000 bail.

Authorities then found a third victim in the city of Fresno. That's when a multi-county investigation started. Four agencies in Madera County continue to investigate – Madera police, Chowchilla Police, the Madera County DA's Office and the Madera County Sheriff's Department. In addition to Madera County, Fresno County is also involved with Fresno Police now as part of the investigation to put an end to the scheme and track down the culprits.

Anyone who may have unwittingly cashed a check or has information about the individuals behind the scheme is urged to call their local authorities. If a victim operates a business in the county of Madera, outside of the city limits, they are advised to call the Madera County Sheriff's Department at 559-675-7770 or toll free at 1-800-560-4911.

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New Year's Resolutions

1. Lose weight/exercise
2. Pay off debt
3. Stop smoking
4. Spend more time with family and friends
5. Quit drinking
6. Be more organized and productive
7. Learn something new
8. Spend less time on Internet
9. Enjoy life more
10. Help others

Source: Composite

DO'S continued from Page 10

syrupy tokens, not to mention totally awkward about how to say "thanks" gracefully. Keep that in mind as you're shopping.

No doubt you will encounter ferociously cute teddy bears, a mix CD of love songs that'll make your heart stir, and flannel pj's with a really cute heart pattern ... but think of how your man will feel unwrapping a gift like that.

"A girlfriend once gave me a book of love poems, not even 'Leaves of Grass' or any of the classics," says Kevin Sintumuang of New Brunswick, New Jersey. "What guy wants to read that?" Answer: almost none.

3. Kitchen and bath bric-a-brac

Even if your guy's life is conspicuously missing a toaster oven, a hamper or a spice rack, unless you find one with 38 electronic widgets to distract him from the domesticity of your gift, skip this idea. It's more like something his sensible mother would send him, and many guys can feel territorial about changes you're indirectly making to their homes. And forget trying to fancy up a bachelor pad type - he won't appreciate your high-class accent, no matter how much you spend. "I got a Hummel Lamplight Caroler figurine for Christmas once from a woman," says Jim Craemer of West Hartford, Connecticut. "That was rough. I was - and am - too ashamed to put it out on the mantle."

4. Self-help anything

Men don't want you to change them; they want you to love them. But some-

times women can't resist helping a guy reach one of his long-term goals. "I got a copy of *What Color is Your Parachute?* as a gift from a date one year," says Matt Horton of Silva, North Carolina. "I felt like she was trying to change my job or tell me I could be a better person. It just made me feel bad."

The same goes for any self-improvement-type gifts that he hasn't explicitly, repeatedly mentioned wanting, whether it's a gym membership, a gift certificate for a facial, a nose-hair trimmer (even though the guys on *Queer Eye* swear buy 'em) or a Rogaine sample. Letting your honey believe that you think he's perfect is actually the greatest gift you can give!

5. Elaborate handmade gifts

While a gift you make can mean much more than anything store-bought, guys often get uncomfortable and feel obligated if you give them something you've truly toiled over. Says Bob Brennan of Pittsfield, Massachusetts: "A woman I'd been dating a couple of months gave me a sweater she'd hand-knit for me ... it must've taken weeks. I felt really awkward that she'd put so much effort into my present and kinda pulled back a bit after that."

You also want to go easy on the handcrafted gifts that celebrate your union. A tray decouped with photos of the two of you is a bit much for anyone but a husband to handle.

Bonus tip: Unlike women, men actually enjoy getting small appliances. Or even large ones. Anything that involves a plasma screen is very, very good, too - albeit very, very expensive.

DID YOU WAIT TOO LONG?

So ... it's Christmas Eve and you still haven't gotten something for that one person that you always put off to the end, hmmm? We at the Ranchos Independent want to help in any way that we can so we offer the generic gift certificate. It has absolutely no value whatsoever, except for the value you give it. Make it out to your Mom and make it good for taking the trash out for a month. Give it to your Dad and make it good for a car wash. Give it to your girlfriend and make it good for a back rub. Will it work? Probably not. But then, don't do anything and see how well THAT works.

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Crime Doesn't Pay: Don't Rob Santa with These Guys Around



It always starts innocently enough. Here James "Whittlin' Jim" Whittle poses with part-time gunfighter, part-time floozy Diana "Rancho Lady" Tucker and their friend, Santa Claus, at Historic Cobb's Ranch ...



... when all of a sudden "Whittlin' Jim" gets a hankerin' for Santa's bag of toys in an obvious suppressed reaction to receiving a lump of coal, or possibly a Barbie instead of a GI Joe, at some point in his life.



"Rancho Lady" goes on a deputizing spree and enlists Susan "Rancho Rita" Lowrance to help track down the wily "Whittlin' Jim" in an effort to get Santa's bag of toys back in time before Christmas.



Some of her choices are better than others as she picks out another posse member who's already analyzing clues left behind by "Whittlin' Jim." Here "Rancho Lady" is debating whether or not to shoot the man to her right.



In typical criminal fashion, "Whittlin' Jim" decides to inconspicuously escape on a fire engine fully loaded with holiday tree shoppers at Cobb's Ranch. Unfortunately for him, the fire engine only drove around in a circle.



No, that's not Dick Cheney preparing to go hunting. In a bizarre bit of prairie justice, this guy known only as "Gun Sites" was somehow part of the "Whittlin' Jim" gang and was the only bad guy shot. Santa DID get his bag back, however, and Christmas was saved. Although he escaped justice, it's thought that "Whittlin' Jim" is more than likely going to turn up on the Dr. Phil Show.

Local Group has a Blast Playing Cowboy and Cowgirl

By Diana Tucker

What a blast at Cobb's Christmas Tree Farm this year! A new group called the San Joaquin Gun Slingers provided rousing entertainment each weekend doing several skits right out of the Old West.

Participants dressed in period-correct old west outfits with .45 and .38 caliber blanks ringing out in gunfights as the good guys tried to put an end to the outlaws who stole Santa's Christmas bag of toys and then tried to slip away to safety in the back of a fire engine

filled with adults and children.

The bad guy was pursued on horseback by the good guys (and girls) who then retrieved Santa's bag after a gunfight delivered sure and swift justice. The posse would then ask the people on the fire truck to get the toys back to Santa safely so he could deliver them on Christmas day.

The San Joaquin Gun Slingers who kept Cobb's Ranch safe from bag stealers were Vick "The Sheriff" Bruno, Susan "Rancho Rita" Lowrance, Diana "Rancho Lady" Tucker, James "Whittlin' Jim"

Whittle and Romero "El Caballero" Cruz. There was also Stephanie Blagen, Jeff Smith and his son, a gentleman named Tony along with his wife Christie and child CeCe, and a man known only as "Gun Sites."

The San Joaquin Gun Slingers are available for hire for gatherings and parties too. You can look for them again at the Ranchos/Hills Seniors' Home & Garden Show during the first weekend in April. They also donate their time to other worthy causes throughout the year

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Easy New Year's Resolutions: Saving Your Life in the Kitchen

New Year's resolutions often begin with "I will lose five pounds" or "I promise to exercise." But here are some resolutions recommended by the United States Department of Agriculture that could save you a trip to the doctor or, worse, the hospital. These resolutions may be easier to keep than the elusive 5 pound goal.

USDA New Year's Kitchen Resolutions

1. I will buy and use a food thermometer.

It's the only way to know if meat, poultry and fish are cooked safely. You can't tell just by looking.

2. I will use an appliance thermometer in the refrigerator and will check to make sure that the temperature is 40 degrees F or below. In the freezer, I will make sure the thermometer reads 0 degrees F or below.

Bacteria grow rapidly at temperatures above 40 degrees F.

3. I will not leave pizza sitting out on the table or my "doggie" bag in the car overnight.

Foods should not be left out more than two hours at room temperature, or one hour if it is over 90 degrees F. When in doubt, throw it out.

4. I will not defrost my turkey in the garage or in the trunk of my car.

The only safe way to defrost food is in the refrigerator, in cold water or in the microwave.

5. I will wash my hands and all food preparation surfaces with soap and water before and after touching raw meat, poultry or fish.

Bacteria on raw meat, fish or poultry can contaminate other foods such as bread or lettuce that will not be cooked.

6. I will not feed my dog or cat old "leftovers" or "take-out" food that's no longer fit for people.

Animals can also be stricken with food borne illnesses.

7. I will not leave "take-out" or "ready-to-eat" food in the refrigerator so long that it's forgotten.

You can't tell by looking at or smelling if a food is unsafe. Throw it away after three days and never taste a food that you don't know what it is or how long it has been in the refrigerator!

8. I will not lick the spoon or the

bowl of homemade cookie dough or cake batter made with raw eggs.

Salmonella - a very unpleasant and potentially dangerous illness - can come from eating raw eggs. Even one taste of raw dough could contain harmful bacteria.

9. When grilling outdoors, I will use a clean plate for the cooked hamburgers, hot dogs or other meat or fish. I won't use the same plate that held raw meat.

Juices from raw meat, poultry or fish could contaminate your cooked food.

10. I will separate cooked foods from uncooked foods when preparing a meal, including using separate cutting boards and knives.

Cross-contamination could cause harmful bacteria from one food to be transferred to another food.

11. I will always put an ice pack in my child's lunch box and my own lunch bag if I have a perishable lunch, such as meat, poultry, fish, milk or eggs.

Foods in lunch boxes sitting in warm classrooms or offices could result in food borne illnesses. Children under the age of 10 are the most vulnerable.

12. I will not "save money" by buying dented cans or cracked jars.

Never use food from damaged containers. This applies to containers that are leaking, bulging or badly dented. Do not use food from cracked jars with loose or bulging lids, canned food with a foul odor or any container that spurts liquid when you open it. It's not worth taking a risk to save a few pennies.


13. I will put meat and poultry packages in plastic bags at the meat counter before putting them in my grocery cart.

Leaking packages from meat or poultry could contaminate other foods in the cart, leading to food borne illnesses.

14. If I have a question about food safety, I will call the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline toll free at 1-888-MPHotline or 1-888-674-6854.

The Hotline is there to help you. Get your questions answered. Do not guess about food safety because the health of your family and friends is at stake. You can call the year-round hotline Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. EST (English or Spanish). Listen to timely recorded food safety messages at the same number 24 hours a day. Check out the FSIS Web site at www.fsis.usda.gov. E-mail questions can be answered by MPHotline.fsis@usda.gov.

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Radanovich's River Restoration, Water Supply Bill Introduced

Last week, Congressman George Radanovich (R-Mariposa) introduced the San Joaquin River Restoration Settlement Act, H.R. 6377, which is historic legislation to resolve an 18-year lawsuit to restore a salmon fishery on the San Joaquin River.

"I became involved in this issue last year to ensure a stable water supply for Valley farmers. With that premise, the provisions in this measure were designed to make sure that water supply levels will remain manageable for farmers as the river is restored. It was also important to me that impacts to third parties, if any, be minimal and voluntary, and the negotiators worked hard to create such language," Radanovich said.

"The significance of this bill cannot be understated. Over the past year and a half, countless hours have been spent in developing this measure, and I commend all those involved in this balanced resolution," Radanovich said. "I especially want to express my appreciation to the Friant Water Users Authority, Natural Resources Defense Council, Department of Interior, Department of Justice, the Department of Commerce and numerous third parties who were involved in the development of this bill. I also thank Senator Feinstein (D-CA), who has introduced an identical bill in the Senate, for her steadfast commitment to this measure along with the members of the Valley delegation."

The settlement legislation achieves two coequal goals: it restores the San Joaquin River and secures water management objectives to mitigate water losses to farmers in the restoration process. These two elements are crucial to the success the Act, and must be implemented in tandem.

The landmark bill gives the people of the San Joaquin Valley a say in how the river is restored, as opposed to waiting for an uncertain outcome from the federal court. The solution is science-based and includes involvement from individuals throughout the Valley, the state and federal agencies.

Resources Chairman Richard W. Pombo (R-Tracy) commented, "Legislation to restore the San Joaquin fishery and provide water certainty to the Central Valley must be enacted to bring an end to this water war. It's time to resolve these issues once and for all."

Congressman Dennis Cardoza (D-

Merced) added, "After weeks of negotiations, I am pleased that we were able to come to an agreement that would allow the settlement to go forward. Successful implementation of this bill would protect the water and property rights of those not party to the litigation and allay millions in potential expenses for downstream landowners and flood control operations. I am committed to working with my Valley congressional colleagues, Senator Feinstein, the settling parties, and 3rd parties to ensure that this legislation and the Settlement Agreement are implemented to achieve the dual goals of restoration and water management.

"This legislation attempts to make the best out of a difficult situation. Hopefully, we can enact the enabling legislation to restore the river and put this contentious issue aside. In the future, for our Valley it is important we develop a long range Regional Water Plan which deals with water supply, water quality, flood control and environmental issues, that can be implemented. We are attempting to do so, on a bipartisan basis with Senator Feinstein and the Valley Congressional delegation. We must remember, however, that this agreement will result in the loss of 165,000 acre feet of water. The impacted communities and farms must not be forgotten and their concerns must be mitigated," Costa said.

"There's no question the amount of water given up for fishery restoration is significant and that its loss will be felt in the Valley," Radanovich said. "But it is a fraction of the amount that the court would have taken away from farmers and cities. The settlement secures the vast majority of the Friant water supply and provides the funding and the assurance to recapture the rest. I and many of my colleagues will work hard to make sure that commitment is fulfilled and the Valley economy is protected as the legislation is implemented."

The bipartisan original cosponsors of H.R. 6377 hail from geographically diverse areas of California. They are Richard Pombo (R-Tracy), George Miller (D-Martinez), Grace Napolitano (D-Norwalk), Dennis Cardoza (D-Merced), and Jim Costa (D-Fresno).

"I'm dedicated to the passage of this measure in Congress and will work toward that end until it is signed into law," Radanovich said.

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New Deputy Returns Home Via LAPD

After a seven year career with the Los Angeles Police Department, former officer Amy Roussell returns home to Madera County.

Before her entire family, including her husband LAPD Sergeant Stephen Roussell, the seasoned officer took her oath and was formally sworn in Dec. 1 as a Madera County Sheriff's Deputy. Roussell's husband was by her side and pinned her new badge on her.

Roussell, a graduate of Yosemite High School in Oakhurst, said her decision to return home was

easy. After she and her husband started a family together, they both decided that rather than raise their child in the big city, it would be best to give their son the kind of life every child deserves – a small community with a hometown feel.

Sheriff John Anderson commented on her "stellar background," saying that a call from the Los Angeles Police Department revealed, "... their loss was our gain."

"Being a mountain girl gives Deputy Roussell an automatic edge," Anderson said, noting that being raised in the foothills, Roussell knew the area better than most and best of all she knows the people.

After her swearing in she thanked both Anderson and Undersheriff Frank Benard for the opportunity. "This is

my home and my community and I am thrilled to be back and be given an opportunity to continue doing what I love and what I do best and best of all to continue doing it here," Roussell said.



Madera County's newest Deputy, Amy Roussell, returns home to Madera County from the LAPD with her husband, LAPD Sergeant Stephen Roussell.

Sheriff's Dept. Adds Two More

Addition Brings Total of Eight New Deputies Since June

During a formal ceremony celebrating the graduating Basic Academy Class from Fresno's State Center Regional Training Facility, two of the 38 cadets were sworn in by Sheriff John Anderson.

New recruits, Deputies Patrick Davis and Matthew Kutz, were sworn in before a packed hall inside the Clovis Community Hills Church.

Thirty-eight men and women were honored Friday afternoon by family, friends and uniformed officers representing several different agencies throughout the San Joaquin

Valley.

Deputies Davis and Kutz began their careers in law enforcement on Monday, Dec. 4 when both started field training – patrolling both Madera County's foothills as well as the Valley Floor.

Since June, Sheriff Anderson has successfully brought on board eight Sheriff's Deputies, however there are still a few openings left on the Madera County force. Anyone interested in learning more about the

Sheriff's Department and how to apply should contact the Department at either 559-675-7770 or toll free at 1-800-560-4911.



New recruits, Deputies Patrick Davis (left) and Matthew Kutz, were sworn in by Sheriff John Anderson at the Clovis Community Hills Church.

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Always wear a helmet, eye protection and protective clothing.

Safe & Sound

Holidays Bring Special Concerns

By David Johnson

I would like to take this opportunity to wish all of you a SAFE and WONDERFUL Holiday Season. Please put to use the many tips that you have learned in past six months of reading this column to ensure the safety of yourself and your loved ones. Remember that during the holiday season a number of specific crimes actually increase. Be sure to keep gifts out of sight. Don't get so preoccupied with the season that you forget about your basic defensive awareness skills. Remember to be calmly and constantly aware of your surroundings (ALL of your surroundings) and mentally prepared to react appropriately to whatever, without feeling nervous, apprehensive, afraid or paranoid. In fact done correctly, you should feel very comfortable, confident and secure. This mental and physical sense will in turn be very evident to the criminal element. Keep a close eye on your children especially within the holiday crowds. If you haven't taught them basic self-defense skills yet maybe I'll see you after the first of the year. Give your children the tools they need. Enroll them in Golden Valley Martial Arts for Christmas. Gift certificates are available! Remember, "The WORST time to start Self-Defense training is AFTER an attack." CONTACT ME. I would love to hear from you. E-mail me at info@masterjohnson.com. Your par-

ticipation 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 your children reviewing the following Websites: www.amw.com/kids, tcs.cybertipline.com and www.missingkids.com/adCouncil.

SELF-DEFENSE TIPS: SEEK PROFESSIONAL INSTRUCTION. 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. He can be contacted at 559-917-5262.

What You Can't See Can Kill You

Fog Season Cloaks the Valley. Are You Ready?

Fog season in the Central Valley is usually during the months of November through February. "Motorists must be alert for rapidly changing conditions in the fog," said Assistant Chief Jim Abrames, CHP Central Division acting commander. "Remember, what you can't see can kill you."

Driving too fast for visibility conditions and following too closely causes collisions in the fog. Drivers must accept the responsibility for driving slower and safer in the fog, Abrames said.

The CHP will have "PACE" units working on major highways between Bakersfield and Modesto on foggy days when visibility is less than 500 feet. The

CHP PACE units will slow vehicles to a safe speed during limited visibility conditions. CalTrans will provide changeable message signs along Highway 99 and I-5 advising of winter driving conditions such as fog and snow.

The CHP/CalTrans Central Valley Transportation Management Center (TMC) will provide information to the media regarding weather and road conditions throughout the valley. Motorists should tune in to local radio and TV stations for up-to date information. Motorists are encouraged to phone the CalTrans highway information network at 1-800-427-road for specific highway information.

What You Can't See

Can Kill You

Fog Driving Tips

- Drive with headlights on low beam. It is illegal to drive with just your parking or fog lights.
- Reduce your speed.
- Avoid crossing traffic unless absolutely necessary.
- Use wipers and defroster as necessary for maximum vision.
- Be patient! Don't pass lines of traffic.
- Unless absolutely necessary, don't stop on any freeway or other heavily traveled road.
- If your car stalls or is disabled, move away from the vehicle to avoid personal injury.
- Consider postponing your trip until the fog clears.

Senior Report

New Club Officers for New Year

By Eleanore Burchell

On Monday, Dec. 11, the members of the Ranchos/Hills Senior Center, located at 37330 Berkshire, installed their 2007 officers while celebrating with a catered dinner. The new slate of officers is as follows: George Hagler, President; Joliene Mason, Vice President; Nancy Koontz, Recording Secretary; Eleanore Burchell, Correspondence Secretary; Shirley Tickel, Treasurer; and Ethel Pronin, Assistant Treasurer. The two new board members installed were Pat Burnett and Felix Ramirez. Christmas carol singing, festive decorations and door prizes added to an enjoyable evening.

There will be NO monthly sale in January. This is tree-planting time of the year so come pick out a new one for your yard when the office is open Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Also, as usual, the boutique and produce sales will be in the main building during the week. Several members have been making pomegranate jelly and at present we have beautiful large pomegranates, lemons and persimmons available. Again, we don't want you to get out of the habit of coming in to see us so remember the plants, cook-books and the boutique sections are also available Monday through Friday 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. and Thursday evenings between 6 and 9 p.m.

Remember Tuesday BINGO NIGHT will start up again on Jan. 23.

Nurses from the Madera PHCA Senior Program will be providing FREE comprehensive health screenings that includes health history, measurement of blood pressure, height and weight, pulse, screenings for diabetes, hearing, vision, urinalysis and more. This service is for persons 50 years and older and scheduled for Wednesday, Dec. 20 between 9:30 and 11:30 a.m. Health assessments are by appointment only so be sure to call Melody or Karla at 675-7893. Pneumonia and tetanus inoculations are available with appointments only.

The December Birthday and Anniversary celebration luncheon at Cats in Madera Ranchos was held Friday, Dec. 1 with 27 members in attendance. The January celebration is planned for Monday, January 15th at 1:00 p.m. at Denny's located at the Northeast corner of Blackstone and Herndon in Fresno.

The Retired Seniors Volunteer Program (RSVP) staff is sponsoring a 4-day Mexican Baja cruise, Feb. 26 through March 2, 2007. They leave Long Beach with a stop at Catalina, on to Ensenada then head back with a fun day at sea before docking in Long Beach. Want to join them? Call Joann Blancett today at 645-4864 as reservations need to be made soon. Only last minute space is available.

Laughter is a lot of fun and also good for your body and soul. If you need someone to laugh with, then we need you at the exercise class held on Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings at 10:15

to 11:30 a.m. We enjoy each other and are always laughing. Also, come and join our Thursday evening potlucks with games played afterward. There is a lot of fun here.

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. You need not be a member to attend these classes. The attendance has been growing but there is always room for one more – you! Even two more if you bring a friend! The watercolor painting class meets on Wednesday afternoons. Call Joann at 645-4864 for the exact time. The line dancing class plans to start up again on Thursday, Jan. 11 at 1 p.m.

Remember, BINGO is normally held every Tuesday evening from 5:30 to 9 p.m. However, due to Christmas and the New Year holidays, we will not be open Dec. 19, 26 and Jan. 2, 9 and 16. Hope to see you again on Jan. 23.

Up and Coming Events:

December 20, Health Screening, call Melody or Karla at 675-7893 for an appointment.

January 6, 8 a.m. – noon, Monthly Sale

January 15, 1 p.m., Birthday and Anniversary celebration at Denny's, Northeast corner of Blackstone and Herndon, Fresno.

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, Watercolor Painting Class, check the center for time.

Wednesday, Card BINGO, noon to 1 p.m.

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

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

We have shared data regarding our Senior Center with you. We wish you an enjoyable Christmas and a Happy New Year with hope, joy and love. Remember 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?

Medicare Enrollment Period Ending December 31, 2006

If you're currently enrolled, or interested in enrolling in, the Medicare Prescription Drug Program (Medicare Part D), Dec. 31, 2006 is the last day to make changes or to sign up.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Agency highly recommend signing up in early December to avoid difficulties after Jan. 1, 2007 due to lag time between enrollments and synchronizing health plan databases.

The Center for Medicare and Medicaid is also reminding beneficiaries that disenrollment from a Plan will be interpreted as their one-time choice for the year. The beneficiary will not be covered until next enrollment period, and will be charged an additional one percent per month penalty, until reenrollment.

For additional information or help with the open enrollment period, visit www.medicare.gov or www.aging.ca.gov.

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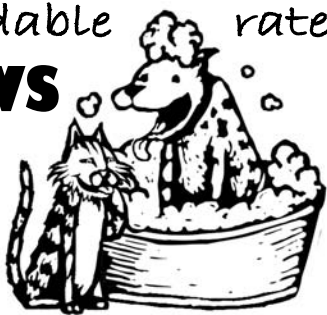


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Garden Tips

Ranchos Growers get Help From UC Master Gardener

Tips for Using Gardening Help Line Beware of Christmas Tree Canker

By Ramona Frances

UCCE Garden Hotline: a free service for the public

Do you have a gardening or horticulture question? If so, call the University of California Extension hotline number for answers. Master Gardeners volunteer to answer gardening questions for Madera County residents. They are trained to provide research based information in home horticulture and pest management. The service is provided at no cost to the public.

Three of the 15 Master Gardeners serving Madera County live in Madera Ranchos. They are familiar with various growing conditions and challenges of the area, and as a result, are willing to share what they have learned with those having similar challenges.

People who wish to ask questions, or leave questions on the hotline voice mail, are urged to be specific. For example--someone wanting to know how to treat for weeds can help the volunteer by identifying the weeds. Doing this will help expedite an answer. If the weed's identity is a mystery, provide a clear description of the weed's growing habits, or better yet, drop off a sample of the plant at the local UCCE office and at the same time give a description of where the weed was found and its growing habits.

Questions a person might anticipate are: Does the weed grow tall, or close to the ground, in patches or like a mat? Does it grow on the lawn, a flower bed, a dry lot or along a dry bed creek? Does it have prickles or spikes? Are its leaves large, small, oval, fuzzy or smooth? Does it like shade or sun? What color are its flowers or seed pods?

Another question a caller might ask is for assistance with an ailing tree. When the caller provides the variety of tree, (if possible), its age, the area the tree is growing, and the care the tree is given, if any will give the volunteer clues as how to answer the question. Questions the caller can expect, are, is the tree growing on a lawn, or in an orchard? How often, if any, is the tree watered, fertilized, pruned and sprayed?

The more observant the caller is, the more information the caller has gathered, the easier it is for the volunteer to provide a customized and effective answer.

Stop Christmas tree canker

After spreading Christmas cheer, stave off spreading a tree disease.

Pitch canker is caused by a fungus that infects Monterey pines and other pines sold in Christmas tree lots all over the San Joaquin Valley.

Indigenous to coastal regions of California, Monterey Pine is also vulnerable to pitch canker in the wild. Most pines native to California are susceptible to pitch canker, but Monterey pine (*Pinus radiata*) is the most widely affected host.

To prevent the spread of Pitch Canker, Jeanette Warnert of UCCE sent out warnings to encourage the public to dispose Christmas trees properly and promptly after the holiday to help stop the spread of infection.

Planting Monterey Pines or Christmas trees sometimes sold in pots is not recommended. Christmas trees sold in pots are often stressed by girdled roots, vulnerable to infection, and often, unsuitable for planting.

To identify the disease, look for lesions that encircle or girdle branches, exposed roots, and the trunk of pine trees. As the tips of girdled branches wilt, the needles to turn yellow, before turning red. The needle clusters fall off, leaving bare branch ends. Flattened or slightly sunken cankers on the trunk usually appear after branches have been infected. Honey-colored, resin-soaked wood is also a characteristic symptom. Infected trees are often attacked by engraver beetles, which further the problem. Scientists fear it will spread to the Sierra Nevada mountains.

To prevent establishment of the disease in the Sierra Nevada and other uninfected areas, U.C. Davis plant pathologist Tom Gordon recommends Christmas trees, pine boughs and any pine cuttings be disposed of right after Christmas in community recycling programs or chipped and spread as a thin layer of mulch, or composted.

The California Board of Forestry prohibits the transport of Monterey pine or other pine firewood, cones, logs and chipped pine material from west of Interstate 5 to east of Interstate 5. The board also designated a "Zone of Infestation" that encompasses California's coastal counties (where Monterey Pine grows wild) from Mendocino in the north to San Diego to the south.

Counties may use the designation to place restrictions on the movement of potentially infested materials.

Pitch canker was found in California in 1986. Transported by native insects, it has spread to many native pines including Monterey pine, Bishop pine and knobcone pine.

Ramona Frances of Madera is a University of California Master Gardener. She can be contacted by e-mail at mgmadera@ucdavis.edu. This column is provided by the Master Gardener program in Madera County. The MG program extends research-based information in home horticulture and pest management, verified by the UCCE Master Gardener program in Madera County. Call UCCE office with your garden questions at 675-7879, ext. 210. Leave a message or stop by the office on Mondays from 1-3 p.m. to speak to a Master Gardener or visit cemadera.usdavis.edu.

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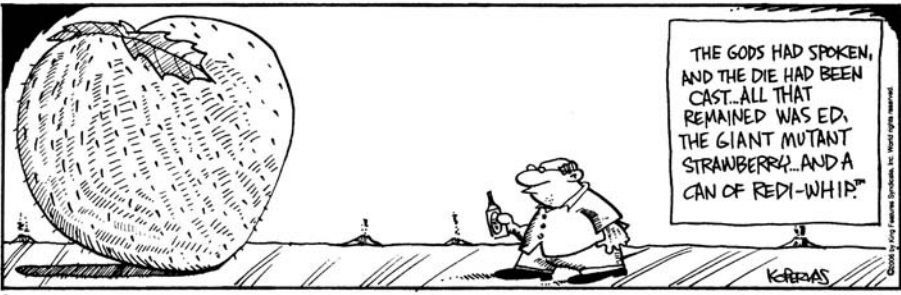
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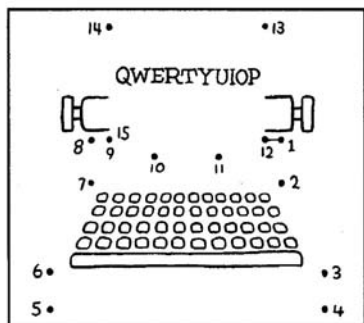
The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF



USING ANY OF THE ABOVE 10 letters from the top row of a standard typewriter, see if you can create a 10-letter word. (You can repeat some letters.) Connect the dots to get the answer.

A RHYMING RIDDLE!
"What's in the church
But not the steeple?
The parson has it,
But not the people."



DOUBLE TROUBLE! Below are six partially spelled words. Four letters are missing from each. In each case, you must find a two-letter word that can be used to fill in the missing letters. Below you'll find some hints.

- 1) Spanish dance.
- 2) Scottish shrub.
- 3) Slow mover.
- 4) Sincere remorse.
- 5) It's worn in winter.
- 6) A long hallway.

Junior Whirl

by Charles Barry Townsend



HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Let's ring in the new year with a dictionary quiz! To the left is a list of eight words, each of which contains either the word "new" or the word "year." Using the following hints, see if you can figure out what these words are:

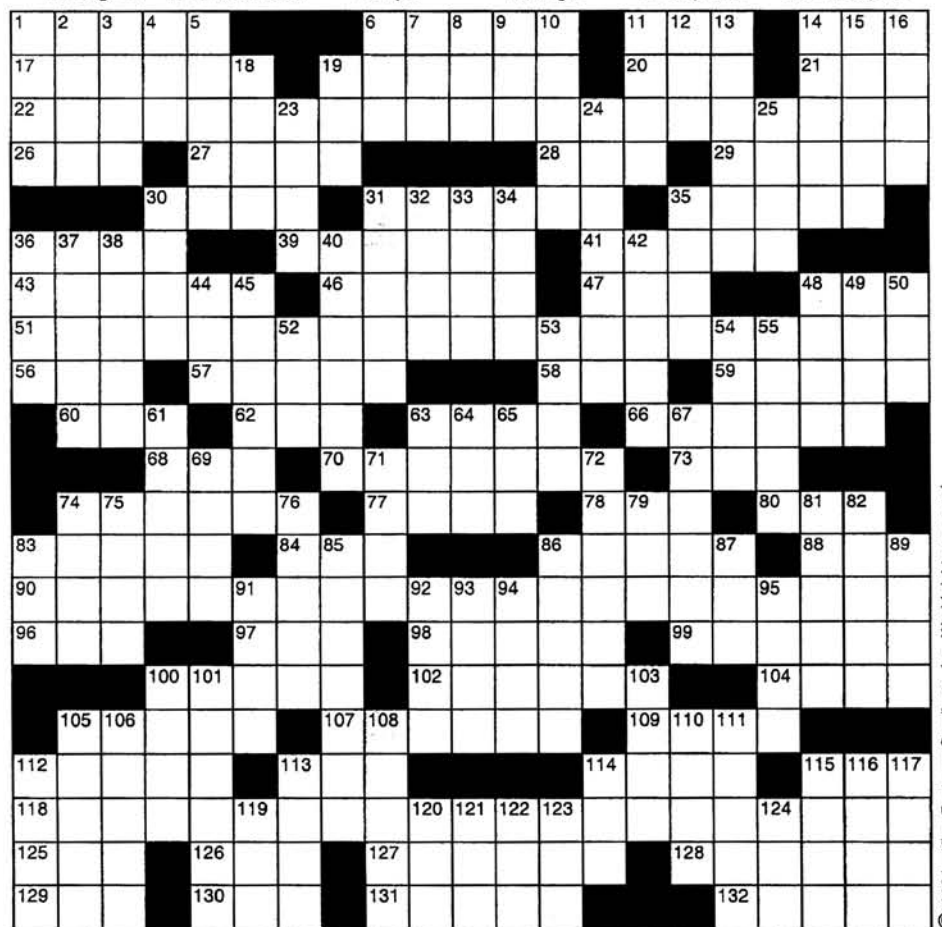
- 1. Staircase support.
- 2. Record of events.
- 3. He knew his apples.
- 4. July 2, for example.
- 5. Current-events movie.
- 6. Certain racehorse.
- 7. Obstruct.
- 8. A longing.

Illustrated by David Coulson

1. Newel, 2. Yearbook, 3. Newton, 4. (ON) Contrition, 5. (AT) Tortoise, 6. (OR) Corridor, 7. (HE) Heather, 8. (TO) Tormentor.

Super Crossword

- ACROSS
- 1 "Outta here!"
- 6 Acted kittenish
- 11 Cul-de- —
- 14 Select, with "for"
- 17 Porthos' pal
- 19 She knew how to get a head
- 20 Blunder
- 21 Kind of cross
- 22 Start of a remark by Florida Scott-Maxwell
- 26 Loser's locale
- 27 Prepare to fly
- 28 Maria — Trapp
- 29 Inflict
- 30 Daly of "Judging Amy"
- 31 '81 Albert Finney film
- 35 Decorate
- 36 Tennis legend
- 39 Uproar
- 41 Knight fight
- 43 Stalls
- 46 Courtyards
- 47 Baseball's "Master Melvin"
- 48 "The Raven" monogram
- 51 Part 2 of remark
- 56 Dundee denial
- 57 Networks
- 58 Formerly known as
- 59 — as a beet
- 60 Drink like a dachshund
- 62 Menu phrase
- 63 California resort
- 66 Let
- 68 Seance sound
- 70 Relaxes
- 73 Chanteuse
- 74 Woodwork-ing tool
- 77 "Eugene Onegin" character
- 78 Candidate's backer
- 80 AAA offering
- 83 Take by force
- 84 Prone
- 86 Bridal path?
- 88 — -Locka, FL
- 90 Part 3 of remark
- 96 Be in debt
- 97 Seville shout
- 98 — France
- 99 Did without dessert
- 100 Put on
- 102 Coercion
- 104 Famed loch
- 105 Daphnis' darling
- 107 Allure
- 109 "Against All —" ('84 film)
- 112 Sign of spring
- 113 "So there!"
- 114 Nastase of tennis
- 115 "Pshaw!"
- 118 End of remark
- 125 Wonderment
- 126 — tai
- 127 "Walker, Texas Ranger" star
- 128 Big name in fashion
- 129 — judicata
- 130 Matterhorn, e.g.
- 131 Put down
- 132 First American saint
- 10 Probe
- 11 John and Yoko's son
- 12 Peacoat
- 13 Packs
- 14 Different
- 15 Hymn of praise
- 16 Ottoman
- 18 Hockey's Mikita
- 19 — Lanka
- 23 Part of CEO
- 24 "Carmen" character
- 25 Horse's gait
- 30 TV host
- 31 Pianist
- 32 King of Israel
- 33 Meat cut
- 34 Wittenberg wife
- 35 Car
- 36 Related
- 37 Rope material
- 38 Biblical buy
- 40 Martin of "The Majestic"
- 42 Aquatic mammal
- 44 Beer barrel
- 45 Nick one's knee
- 48 Raison d'—
- 49 Sailed through
- 50 Third degree?
- 52 "Lorenzo's —" ('92 film)
- 53 Oklahoma city
- 54 Poverty
- 55 Fall flower
- 61 Periscope part
- 63 He gives a hoot
- 64 Lively dance
- 65 Santa —, CA
- 67 He knew all the angles
- 69 — Spumante
- 71 A bit of Bach
- 72 Curry components
- 74 Sailors
- 75 Present
- 76 Mete out the mine-strone
- 79 Timber tree
- 81 Bakery buy
- 82 Duel-use items?
- 83 "Says —?"
- 85 Vows
- 86 TV's "The Black —"
- 87 Ivy Leaguer
- 89 "No ifs, —, or buts"
- 91 Make too much of
- 92 "O patria
- mia" singer
- 93 Melancholy
- 94 Architect
- 95 Bears' lairs
- 100 Heady quaffs
- 101 Mrs. Richard Wagner
- 103 Go it alone
- 105 Russell of "Gladiator" board
- 108 Hoteller Helmsley
- 110 Pons or Ponselle
- 111 Exploits
- 112 Out of range
- 113 Cut a cuticle
- 114 April initials
- 115 Fedora fabric
- 116 Facts, for short
- 117 School founded in 1440
- 119 Guy's counterpart
- 120 Watch pocket
- 121 Author Levin
- 122 "— Brown" ('97 film)
- 123 Quiche or pizza
- 124 Shemp sib



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TRIVIA TEST

By Fifi Rodriguez

- 1. LITERATURE: Who wrote the novel "Absalom, Absalom!"?
- 2. TIMES & DATES: What is also known as the "vernal equinox"?
- 3. HISTORY: Who was the first of Henry VIII's six wives?
- 4. LANGUAGE: What is meaning of the Latin phrase "annus mirabilis"?
- 5. TELEVISION: Where did the young women work in the 1970s sitcom "Laverne & Shirley"?
- 6. GAMES: An ace counts as how many points in the card game blackjack?
- 7. CHEMISTRY: Which chemical element has the symbol S?
- 8. U.S. STATES: What is the meaning of the state name "Illinois"?
- 9. GOVERNMENT: What does Article 1 of the Constitution do?
- 10. GENERAL KNOWLEDGE: What is the lowest rank of Boy Scout?

MAGIC MAZE

BEGINNING AND ENDING WITH THE SAME VOWEL



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

- Academia
- Aloha
- Aroma
- Atlanta
- Earlobe
- Educate
- Elude
- Iraqi
- Israeli
- Obbligato
- Ohio
- Ontario
- Oregano
- Oswego
- Overdo

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Answers

- 1. William Faulkner
- 2. Start of spring
- 3. Catherine of Aragon
- 4. Wonderful year
- 5. Shotz Brewery
- 6. 1 or 11 points
- 7. Sulfur
- 8. Illini, a French word meaning men or soldiers
- 9. Establishes the legislative branch of government
- 10. Tenderfoot

Handicapped Hunters Bag the Limit

A "persons dependent upon a wheelchair" pheasant hunt was held on Nov. 19, 2006, near Chowchilla in Madera County. This is the eighth year of this special hunt and is the only one of its kind conducted by the Department of Fish and Game. A 180-acre alfalfa field was provided by a private landowner for this one-day event.

The hunt started at 11 a.m. instead of the traditional legal shooting time of 8 a.m. for pheasant hunting. This would give the fog a chance to lift, if present, and also would provide dryer field conditions for the pheasants which, in turn, would allow them to fly better plus much nicer conditions for the hunters and wheelchair pushers. Seventy-five male pheasants were released at approximately 10 a.m. prior to the arrival of the hunters. This prevents the hunters from knowing where the birds went when released and it also allows the pheasants to distribute better and settle in before hunting started at 11 a.m. Volunteers with trained pointing dogs were used to locate the birds. When a dog "locked" on a point, a wheelchair hunter was pushed into shooting position by a Chowchilla High School football player. The pheasant was flushed by the dog handler so that, hopefully, a shot could be taken.



Success! Dinner is next.

Twenty-five pheasants for this special hunt were purchased with Madera County fish and wildlife propagation funds and 50 by the Game Bird Heritage Program (GBHP). The public was informed of the hunt by News Releases sent to over 200 newspapers, excerpts in sportsmen's clubs newsletters, the Department's Wing Beat News and web page, the GBHP's 2006-2007 Schedule of Special Hunts and as a courtesy of Western Outdoor News. In addition, the News Release was mailed to hunters that participated in



Chowchilla High football players positioning a hunter.

previous hunts. Nine hunters participated in this hunt and killed 27 rooster pheasants for an average of three birds per hunter. Volunteers from the Madera Breakfast Lions Club brought out their barbecue on wheels and provided hamburgers, hot dogs, soft drinks and bottled water for the hunters and volunteers. Hunters were treated with a little extra kindness this year by Spring Valley's 4-H Club, located near O'Neals in eastern Madera County. Four club members and their club leader cleaned the birds, sealed them in plastic bags, packed them on ice and gave them a non-returnable ice chest to take the birds home in. The ice was donated by the Fresno County Sportsmen's Club, and the ice chests were a gift of a private citizen.

The hunt was appreciated by the handicapped hunters. The success of this hunt was only possible with the help of all the volunteers and the \$14.75 access fee was waived as requested by the landowner.



Spring Valley 4-H Club members cleaning pheasants.

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John Herrera, Realtor

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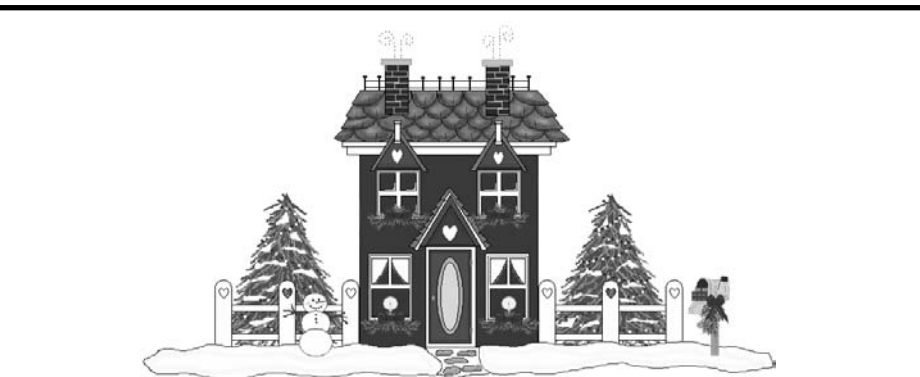
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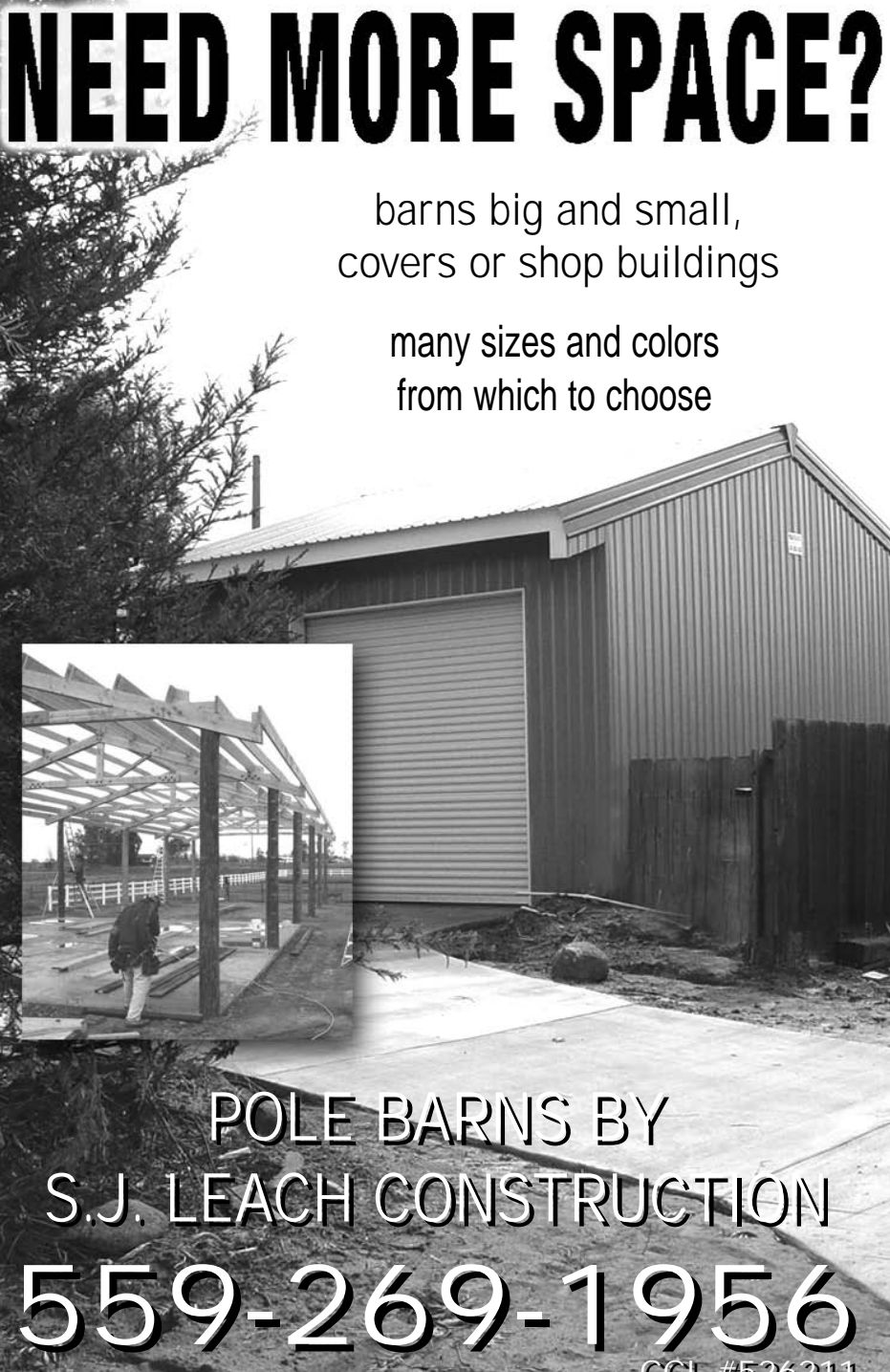
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