

# The Ranchos Independent



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Volume 13 Issue 2 2017

The Official Publication of Southeastern Madera County

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## MEASURE



# TAXING SAFETY?

by Karen Petryna

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On March 7, residents of the unincorporated areas of Madera County, including all those who live in zip code 93636, will have an opportunity to participate in another election — the results of which will directly affect their pocketbooks, their environment and possibly their safety. Measure L, if passed by a full two-thirds majority of voters, will impose a 1 percent tax on the sale of non-food goods sold only in the unincorporated areas of the County, strictly to provide additional fire, emergency and deputy sheriff services in the unincorporated areas. If approved, the monetary impact to residents will begin in the fall when the overall sales tax, which was reduced to 7.75 percent at the beginning of the year, will return to 8.75 percent.

#### **Fire Department Upgrades**

Nancy Koerperich, Unit Chief for the Madera-Mariposa-Merced Unit of Cal Fire, with whom the County has contracted for firefighting and emergency services since 1928, said Measure L has several components for the Fire Department, all of which will be implemented over a six-year period. First, it will pay for three new fire stations which will be located in Bass Lake, North Fork and the Chowchilla/Fairmead area. And, since the one person per fire engine scenario is a proven safety hazard and Cal Fire will no longer contract for stations with only one fire fighter, all new stations will get two-person, 24/7 staffing. Second, the five current stations will also be brought up to the minimum staffing requirements for safety with two full-time fire fighters per station. Koerperich said she is just grateful that within six years the unincorporated areas of Madera County will have eight stations manned with two full time fire fighters each. This will include hiring 25 additional fire fighters. She said the Madera County Board of Supervisors is committed to doing their part by paying to improve the current level of equipment, to provide water tenders and infrastructure, and to give paid call fire fighters a raise — all separate and apart from Measure L funds. Again, solely to serve the unincorporated areas of the County. Koerperich said she is also very grateful to Sheriff

Jay Varney for taking only 20 percent of the Safety Sales Taxes that will be collected and allowing the Fire Department to take 80 percent, since they are in such dire need.

#### **Deputy Sheriff Service Upgrades**

Sheriff Varney, who, like Chief Koerperich, spoke at the Yes on Measure L Campaign Public Safety Forum held at the Ranchos Middle School on Feb. 15, said he supports Measure L because: "It's a 1-cent sales tax dedicated to greatly improving public safety in unincorporated Madera County." When asked at the Forum, he said there were six deputies and a sergeant working to cover the entire county that night, the following night there would be nine, and if Measure L passes, nine new Sheriff's Deputies would be hired; seven in the first year after implementation and two more in the next few years.

#### **Opposition to Measure L**

New taxes are never popular, and Measure L has its detractors who have their own website, [www.NoOnMeasureL.org](http://www.NoOnMeasureL.org). By way of argument, opponents of the Safety Sales Tax refer to actions by previous Boards of Supervisors such as giving County employees raises and list the amount of money the County spends on welfare as well as estimated amounts they may spend in the future on other projects.

To address those concerns Auditor/Controller Todd Miller is voluntarily participating in the series of Public Safety Forums being held in February. In his presentation, Miller says that of the County's \$266 million budget, only 23 percent, or \$63 million, is controlled by County Supervisors and that does not include welfare which is controlled and paid for by the State. Miller said that of the \$63 million that the Su-

pervisors control, 64 percent, or \$40 million is currently applied to protection services with fire at 12 percent and the sheriff's department at 28 percent.

Further, Miller said of the 1,700 people the County employed before the economic downturn, only 700 remain and of those that remain, they have been compensated approximately 25 percent less than those in neighboring counties. This causes Madera County to be in a continuous rehiring-retraining mode as people leave for better-paying jobs elsewhere. Miller concluded by pointing out that deputies and prison guards that have remained have not received a raise since 2007. He said that for all the stated reasons, current employees' salaries simply cannot be used to pay for more protection services.

#### **Supervisor Support**

Supervisor Brett Frazier, also in attendance at the Feb. 15 Forum, acknowledged mistakes had been made in the past. He said the Board had finally gotten "our finances in order," and when asked why he and Supervisor Tom Wheeler had decided to hold a special election for a sales tax for only the unincorporated areas

of the County, he said the cities' and the unincorporated areas' needs are vastly different, and while he and Wheeler had tried to work out a way to share more services and expenses with the cities, he did not believe that such an arrangement would provide the unincorporated areas their fair share. He said passage of Measure L will not only ensure that the special sales tax revenue is applied exclusively to the unincorporated areas, but it will only go to fire, emergency and sheriff services. Although not required, Measure L funds' dispersal will also be subject to annual, independent financial audits and a minimum annual review by a Citizen's Oversight Committee, he said.

#### **Wheeler Addresses Opposition**

Measure L opponents also point to the fact that County funds are being spent to hold the election as well as to educate the public about it and that the tax is anticipated to generate approximately \$8

million in additional revenue per year, even without accounting for expected population growth. But Supervisor Wheeler doesn't see those as negatives. He says 30-50 percent of sales tax revenue is generated by the four million tourists who travel on Highway 41 to Yosemite and those who travel and stop on Highway 99. Wheeler said he's pushing Measure L, "... because it's one of the most important opportunities to improve community safety ..." that he's come across during his 11-year tenure as Supervisor. In referring to sources of sales tax from tourists, he said Pilot service station on Highway 99 is the largest sales tax generator for Madera County, bringing in more than \$1 million per year. And he said Klein's, Fresno County's largest tax generator, is moving to Madera County.

#### **Measure L is a Sales Tax**

Volunteer Campaign Manager Bill Ritchie said he likes the fact that Measure L is structured as a sales tax because it ensures "everybody has a little skin in the game." He said for the first time we now have a Board that is requiring developers to fund their own services, but that doesn't address the current stagnant funding crisis. "Proposition 13 has taken money from the County for the State and the Feds," Ritchie said, adding, "we need to bring the Fire Department up to 21st century standards."

#### **Frazier Says There's No Better Way**

Supervisor Frazier agreed. He said other than creating a Benefits Assessment District paid for by property owners only, "There just isn't any way to do it other than Measure L." He said, "If you haven't been happy with the Board in the past, don't punish everybody. We don't get everything right, but we got this right."





## Flag Barn Changes Hands, CMC Hospital Planned

Two hundred acres of land that include the iconic "Flag Barn" property located on the northeast corner of Avenue 12 and Highway 41 have been sold by property owner McCaffrey Homes to Community Medical Centers, whose future plans are to build a medical facility there. The sale was made public on Sunday, Feb. 19 through a public relations piece in the Fresno

Bee.

Community Medical Centers operates several medical facilities in Fresno and Clovis, including Community Regional Medical Center, Clovis Community Medical Center, Fresno Heart & Surgical Hospital, Community Behavioral Health Center, California Cancer Center, Community Health Center-Sierra, Community Subacute &

Transitional Care Center and the Deran Koligian Ambulatory Care Center.

As the area of Southeast Madera County develops, a proposed 60,000 homes will eventually be built through various housing developments. Community Medical Centers was quoted as saying the Madera purchase puts them in the position "...when and where healthcare demands rise."

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Dear Editor:

Here are some reasons why I'm voting "no" on Measure L, the "Safety Tax":

1. The County continues to pursue an OHV [Off Highway Vehicle] park for a special interest group that wants to drive fast on dirt. Estimated cost to taxpayers for getting the park operational: \$1.2 million. Approximate additional cost to tax payers if park does not meet the operating standards of the grant conditions: \$2.2 million. Why can't this tax money be used for fire protection?

2. The Board of Supervisors passed a resolution that would require taxpayers to pay the entire PERS [Public Employees Retirement System] contribution for the pensions of Madera County elected officials and department heads (Madera County Resolution 2016-257; 8/20/16). Why can't this potential hundreds of thousands of tax money be used for fire protection instead?

3. Taxpayer funds of \$34.5 million – plus cost of new furnishings – for a government center. Why couldn't these funds be used for fire protection?

4. Starbucks kiosk for the government center whose initial estimated cost to taxpayers is \$256,000 plus yearly cost of kiosk employee benefits and resource services, insurance, tax exemption, IT allowance, liability insurance, shortfall, etc.: (Google 2/9/16 Aramark Starbucks kiosk - agreement). Why couldn't these funds be used for fire protection?

5. Between 2015-2017, approximately \$7 million in salary increases and benefits for county employees and the Board of Supervisors. Why couldn't this taxpayer money be used for fire protection instead?

6. Matching grant services for a homeless shelter in Oakhurst and for a proposed additional homeless shelter. Why can't cost of matching services be used for fire protection instead?

7. Estimates for the proposed County monument: \$1 million - \$1.4 million. Why can't these taxpayer funds be used for fire protection?

8. Changing the Veterans Administration position from part-time to full-time. Was this new full-time position offered to an outgoing

supervisor? Since the Grand Jury report indicated that the department had adequate staffing, why doesn't the position remain in its part-time status? Why isn't the cost of the increase in salary used for fire protection instead?

9. The Oversight Committee which Measure L provides will be selected by the Board of Supervisors – this is the very governing body that has brought fire protection to its knees in Madera County. A classic case of the foxes selecting foxes to guard the hen house.

10. Measure L provides for a yearly audit. This audit will be reviewed by the Oversight Committee and the Board of Supervisors. Taxpayers will have to rely on the very governing body, the Board of Supervisors, who failed to take action on prior audit issues. Ref: 2012-2013 Madera County Grand Jury; final report complaint regarding County administration and finance (excerpts) findings:

4. The Madera County Board of Supervisors:

B. Failed to direct corrective action be taken to solve cash account issues after being provided detailed recommendations from previous outside audits;

C. Allowed the delay for more than one year of the filing of the outside audit (single audit) without determining the actual cause of this failure;

D. Failed to request findings of the 2009 and 2010 audits;

E. Failed to take effective action to eliminate the friction which exists between the Treasurer, the CAO and the Auditor-Controller.

11. Isn't it true that \$3.2 million in taxpayer funds allocated for improving Road 415 were diverted to the City of Madera through an illegal board vote? (Madera County case no. MCV0362110). By the time the violation was tried in court the money was gone and the judge dismissed the case.

12. The promise that Measure L will improve ISO ratings, which will cause fire insurance premiums to drop, is misleading. Many insurance companies do not use ISO ratings. Out of the 100 points in an ISO rating, only 50

Please see **LETTERS** on P. 16

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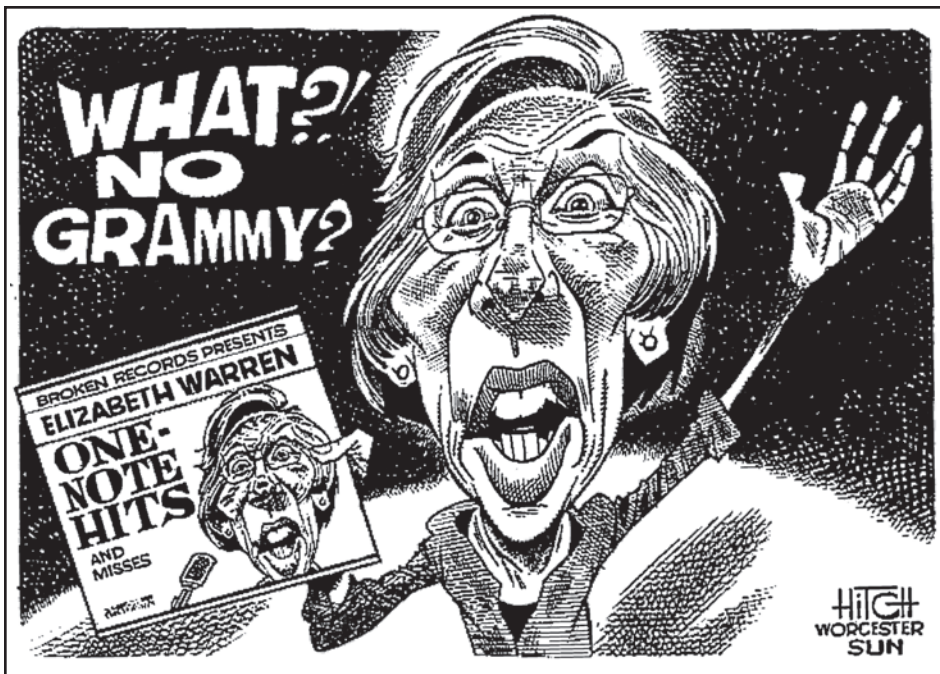
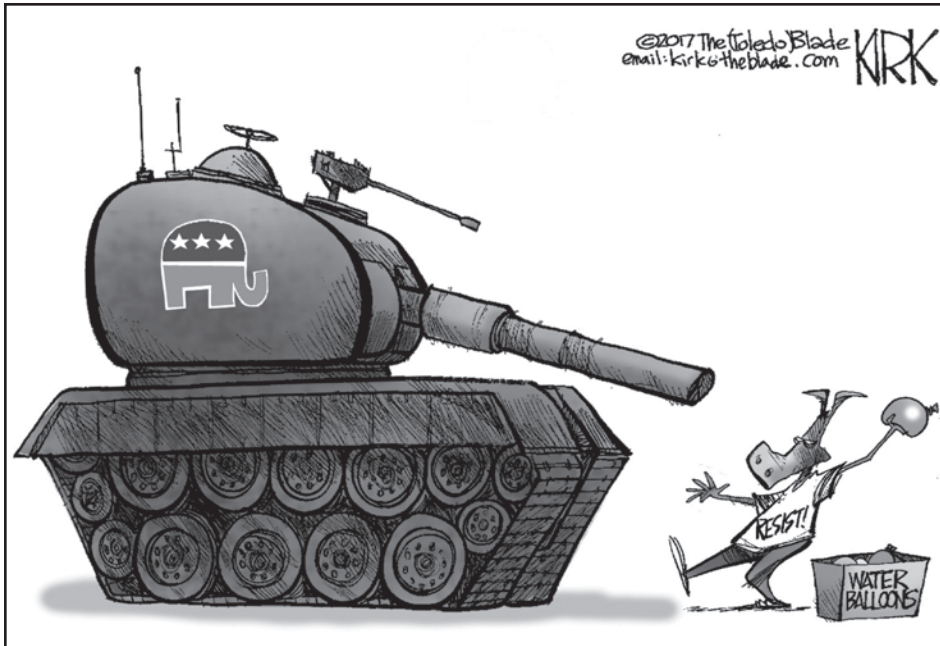
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## Editorial

### Measuring Measure L

By Randy Bailey

I need to get this off my chest: I hate taxes.

I understand that they are often necessary so I begrudgingly pay my fair share -- but not a penny more.

So there's the dichotomy: The necessity of taxes and the revulsion toward them. In the case of Measure L, there is no question fire and police services in Madera County, specifically the unincorporated areas such as the Ranchos, are woefully under represented. The story of the house in the Ranchos that burned half a block away from Station 19 because there weren't "authorized" firefighters on hand who could drive firetrucks has become legend. And in the case of our sheriff's deputies, their territory ranges from Firebaugh to the gates of Yosemite and the whole width of Madera County. I have talked to deputies in the past who said that there were times when there was a mere handful of officers at any given time covering that large of an area. What does that mean to us? Well, if there's a big crime scene in Oakhurst requiring multiple deputies, try getting an officer out to the Ranchos when you hear strange sounds outside your house at two in the morning. It's physics: You can only occupy one space at a time.

So who could be against getting

more emergency personnel out there to help us in our times of need? I mean it's only a penny, right?

Here's the problem (and this problem is like an onion -- it has LOTS of layers): We already pay enough in taxes to cover this stuff. According to JustFacts.com, taxes collected by federal, state and local governments in 2015 totaled \$4.9 trillion. An average of \$39,539 for every American household. Nationwide, the \$1.6 trillion collected by state and local governments was 34 percent from sales taxes, 29 percent from property taxes, 23 percent from individual income taxes, 4 percent from corporate income taxes and about 9 percent from other taxes. That's a lot of taxes.

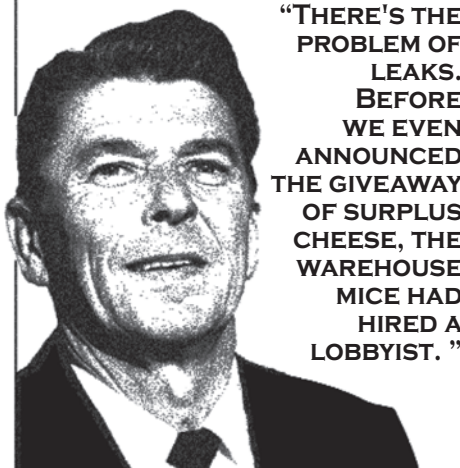
So if we've got all of this tax money, why do we need another tax just to get basic protection? Because that original money is being spent in other places. I'm not blaming our Supervisors. Their hands are tied on a lot (not all) of this. This year Madera County has an annual budget of \$266 million but the Supervisors only have discretion over \$63 million. That's just 23 percent of the total budget. Of their \$63 million, 64 percent goes to fire/police protection and the remaining 36 percent has to cover everything else.

See, the state knows better what to do with our money than we do. They've set up these things that the County has to pay for, even if the County doesn't have the money. They're called unfunded liabilities. The California Policy Center estimates that California state and local governments owe \$1.3 trillion from bonds and loans, as well as unfunded pension and other employment benefits. Add to that billions of dollars in neglected infrastructure and you get 52 percent of our Gross State Product being spent before it ever walks in the door.

What does all of this mean? If the people of the unincorporated areas of Madera County want fire and police protection we're going to have to pay for it -- again. But here's the good news: We won't really be paying for the bulk of it. Since this is a sales tax and not a property tax, the one cent per dollar is generated by purchases. And each year approximately 4 million people travel through the unincorporated areas of Madera County to get to Yosemite. They stop, they buy gas, they eat, they buy trinkets. Four million of them each year.

I have no problem with families from France, Germany and Japan paying for my sheriff's deputies or firefighters. Thank you.

### THE RAY GUN SHOOTING STRAIGHT TO THE HEART



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# Feminists Ruining Feminism

It's hard being a woman. Not because of the oppressive patriarchal establishment or that wretched wage gap. I can deal with all that. No, it's tough because everyone wants to lump all women in with the modern feminist movement. Suddenly I feel the incessant need to qualify my very existence to everyone I meet. Hi my name is Eryn, and no, I am not a feminist and I don't own a genitalia hat.

It's exhausting.

My problem with the modern women's movement is not that I don't believe in the equality of the sexes, because I do. My problem is I don't agree with the hypocrisy of the movement in general. The original feminist

movement, and I'm going way back here to women's suffrage, was about giving women a voice and showing the world that we are not property or second class citizens. The feminist move-

ment seems to have devolved into a steaming pile of rubbish that is content just to try and convince the world that men suck, women rule and if you even so much as look at me in my tube top and booty shorts you are invading my sacred space. That's not feminism, that's not about women's rights, that's just an attempt to further enforce the ridiculous notion that women are forever victims of society and don't have to take responsibility for anything we do. Dress proactively and men stare. (How dare you! Rape culture!) Have unprotected sex, get pregnant or an STI. (My birth control wasn't covered by my insurance and I couldn't be bothered to go to the drug store and purchase condoms. Down with the patriarchy!) We are equal, but you know, can't really be held responsible for our own actions because we are del-

**GEN  
ERA  
TION  
WHY**  
by **eryn b. nyre**



icate little flowers that need to be protected from the big, bad world. But don't you dare tell us that we are delicate little flowers because that's sexism, you misogynist dirt bag. Of course, in fairness, this particular brand of idiocy is prevalent in millennials of all sexes and gender identities.

*This new age, neo-hippie women's movement is giving feminism a bad name ... what's worse is that you can't disagree with a feminist unless you want to be labeled sexist, even if you are actually a woman.*

I have trouble respecting a movement that asserts its outrage at offensive "locker room talk" but encourages its members to walk around the nation's capital with vagina hats on their heads. I have trouble respecting people that claim to be offended by President Trump's use of the dreaded P-word but have no problem shouting it at the top of their lungs and plastering it all over their protest signs. I have trouble respecting a movement that books someone like Madonna to talk about how offended and disgusted she is by the President's (and his supporters') objectification of women, despite the fact that she built her career on selling her sexuality (see her videos for "Justify My Love" and "Human Nature" as examples). Sex usually sells but these gals ain't buyin' - well, unless the sex in question is being sold by pop stars and rappers. I have no problem with people who were truly offended by his comment, it was crude, but I do have a problem with

Please see **GEN WHY** on P. 7

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## GEN WHY cont. from P. 6

people feigning offense because they think it gives a reason to complain.

This new age, neo-hippie women's movement is giving feminism a bad name. Feminism should be about making sure all women know they don't have to take a backseat to men just because of their genitalia. Instead we have a bunch of Hollywood whiners talking their dirty bed sheets and attacking the White House like that's something noble, all in the name of girl power.

What's worse is that you can't disagree with a feminist unless you want to be labeled sexist, even if you are actually a woman. A man is not allowed to have an opinion on a woman's reproductive health despite the fact that his tax dollars are expected to help pay for Planned Parenthood. Don't you dare tell a girl she needs to dress more conservatively because she is distracting the young boys, you must teach the boys not to look otherwise you are perpetuating rape culture. Can you imagine if a boy came to

class wearing booty shorts and no shirt? The teacher would tell him to put more clothes on. Would that be sexist? I wonder if it's still called rape culture when the girls ogle the boys during football practice? As if asking a young girl not to wear overly revealing clothes will somehow lead to a growing number of parents teaching their sons how to attack and assault girls. It couldn't possibly have anything to do with puberty, raging hormones and their physical, noticeable and usually involuntary side effects. I have an idea. Why don't we just chemically castrate all young boys until they mature and find a woman who agrees to marry them. Then after the wedding we take them off the drugs. That ought to fix the rape culture problem, heck and the teen pregnancy problem. Wait, maybe this isn't such a crazy idea.

The point here is that this modern feminist movement is not really about equality. It's about creating an entire group of victims simply because they were born with "innies" instead of "outies."

**The Bookshelf****Tax Forms to Flatlanders Applications**

By Amanda Judd

February has been *Love Your Library Month*. We cannot believe that the first day of spring is approaching so quickly and we are looking forward to the fun story times at the library. Remember, story time is every Thursday at 11 a.m.

Madera County Behavioral Health Services will be holding a Community Stakeholder Planning Meeting on March 21 from 1-3 p.m. at the Ranchos Library. You will have an opportunity to learn about the department's budget, mental health and substance use services. You will be able to provide planning input for next year's plan. Please RSVP with Eva at 559-673-3508 by March 18. Snacks will be provided.

2016 Tax forms and booklets have been received and are available for pick up in the library.

The 27th Annual Flatlanders Day is quickly approaching. Preparations are well underway and the library has all Craft Fair Vendor applications available. If you are interested in being a vendor, please contact the library at 645-1214. Parade applications are provided at the Chamber of Commerce. Vendor booth applications will be sent via email and there are

some printed packets available for pickup in the library during regular operating hours. Remember that vendors are assigned spaces on a first come, first served basis. Craft booths are \$40 and food booths are \$60. Payment is required at the time the application is submitted. Madera County Environmental Health procedures will be strictly enforced for all food vendors.

We are looking for contributors to help fund our Summer Reading Program. You may contribute gift cards funds to help us with our weekly performances/activities and our grand prize. If you would like to donate, please contact the library for further information. Donors will be recognized on distributed program materials. Help us make our Summer Reading Program memorable for all of those who participate.

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## Mac 'n Cheese Anyone?

On Feb. 2, we all waited for Punxsutawney Phil to emerge from his burrow to let us know how he was going to predict the weather for the next six weeks. The celebration began as a Pennsylvania German custom in the 18th and 19th centuries. Its ancient European origins used a badger or a sacred bear as the prognosticator, as opposed to a groundhog. If it is cloudy when a groundhog emerges from its burrow on this day, then the spring season will arrive early, sometime before the vernal equinox; if it is sunny, the groundhog will supposedly see its shadow and retreat back into its den and winter weather will continue for six more weeks. According to StormFax Weather Almanac and records kept since 1887, Punxsutawney Phil's weather predictions have been correct 37 percent of the time. Phil saw his shadow this year predicting six more weeks of winter. He must be correct this year because since that day we have had rain, cold and fog.

The cold weather reminds me of comfort food. Something that warms the kitchen while it is cooking and warms you up on the inside when you eat it: A big pot of homemade soup, stews, or how about macaroni and cheese?

### Macaroni and Four Cheeses

1 pound macaroni  
Salt  
1 C heavy cream  
2 T butter  
1 clove garlic, peeled  
½ C grated fontina  
½ C crumbled goat cheese (chevre)

½ C grated Parmesan  
½ C grated Romano  
Freshly ground black pepper  
Minced fresh parsley

Cook macaroni according to package directions in boiling, lightly salted water. Do not overcook.

Put the cream, butter and clove of garlic into a Dutch oven and heat on the stove over low heat. When the cream is hot, add the Fontina, Goat cheese, Parmesan and Romano.

Drain the macaroni (reserving some of the cooking water) and add



the macaroni to the pot. Stir gently to combine adding some of the reserved water if necessary for consistency. Don't over mix. If there are bits of cheese in the mix, don't worry.

Taste and add a little salt, if necessary, pepper and chopped parsley. Serve immediately.

Can't get your family to eat their veggies? How about hiding them in mac 'n cheese?

### Hidden Veggie Mac 'N Cheese

1 pound elbow macaroni cooked according to package directions. Cook al dente.

½ C water  
1 - 2 C cauliflower florets  
1 - 2 C butternut squash, diced  
1 - 2 C carrots, sliced  
2 C milk  
2 C Cheddar cheese shredded  
4 oz. cream cheese

Add water, cauliflower, squash and carrots in a pot over medium heat. Cover and cook until vegetables are tender.

Add everything into a blender, including the cooking water, and blend until smooth. Return blended vegetables to pot over medium heat and add the milk, cheese and cream cheese. Stir until smooth. Add macaroni, reduce heat, mix thoroughly and cover for 20 minutes. Enjoy.

### Classic Baked Macaroni and Cheese

½ package (18 oz.) elbow macaroni  
2 C milk  
2 T butter  
2 T all-purpose flour  
½ tsp. salt  
¼ tsp. black pepper  
1 (10 oz.) block extra sharp Cheddar cheese, shredded  
¼ tsp. red pepper flakes (optional)

Preheat oven to 400.

Cook macaroni to al dente, according to package directions.

Microwave milk at HIGH for 1 ½ minutes. Melt butter in a large skillet or Dutch oven over

Please see **RECIPE** on P. 9

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**RECIPE** cont. from P. 8

medium-low heat, whisk in flour until smooth. Cook, whisking constantly, for 1 minute. Gradually whisk in warm milk, whisking constantly, for 5 minutes or until thickened. Whisk in salt, black pepper, 1 cup shredded cheese and red pepper flakes – if using – until smooth, stir into pasta. Spoon pasta mixture into a lightly greased 2-qt. baking dish; top with remaining cheese. Bake at 400 for 20 minutes or until golden and bubbly.

Want an elegant mac 'n cheese? Just add lobster meat!

*Mac 'n Lobster*

- 1 pound elbow macaroni
- 1 quart milk
- 1 stick unsalted butter, divided
- ½ C all-purpose flour
- 12 oz. Gruyere cheese, grated (4 C)
- 8 oz. extra sharp Cheddar, grated (2 C)
- ½ tsp. black pepper
- ½ tsp. nutmeg
- 1 ½ pounds cooked lobster meat
- 1 ½ C fresh white bread crumbs (5 slices, crusts removed)

Preheat oven to 375 degrees.

Cook macaroni according to package directions.

In a large pan, melt 6 tablespoons of butter and add the flour. Cook over low heat for 2 minutes, stirring with a whisk. Whisk in the milk and cook for a minute or two more, until thick. Stir in the Gruyere and Cheddar, salt, pepper and nutmeg. Fold in the cooked macaroni and lobster meat. Place the mixture into a buttered baking dish. Melt the remaining 2 tablespoons of butter, combine with the fresh bread crumbs and sprinkle on top of mixture. Bake for 30 to 35 minutes or until sauce is bubbly and macaroni is browned on top.

In just about every recipe I read preparing this article, they all suggested using brick cheese and grating it at home. I learned that the packaged, grated cheese is dusted with something that prevents it from sticking together and will not be as creamy as cheese grated fresh from a brick.

If Phil is correct, winter should end just in time for Daylight Savings Time to begin at 2 a.m. on Sunday, March 12. Before going to bed on the 11th I'll set all my clocks ahead one hour. Remember, spring forward and fall back.

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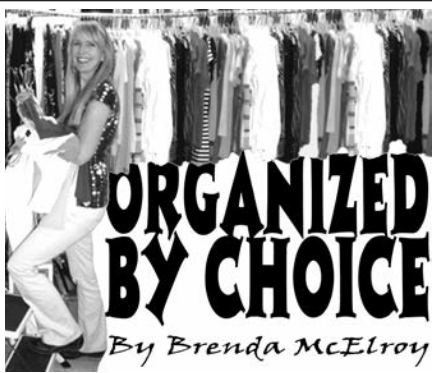


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**Taxes Too Easy**

I discovered parchment paper! How did I not know about this for so long? It's not like I just started baking last year. For years, I've pried stuck-on cookies off baking sheets and had to soak them before washing. What a discovery parchment paper was. My baked goods slide right off the pan and leave nary a crumb. I'm sure those of you who use it weren't trying to keep the rest of us in the dark, but it's not something that usually comes up in conversation. Well, it does now. The other day I was working with a client in her kitchen. As we organized her cookie sheets in the stand-up racks, I couldn't help but ask, "Do you know about parchment paper?"

Sometimes a simple fix can make all the difference in our ability or enjoyment of a task. Not all of us are bakers, but all of us are taxpayers. I'm not going to propose that any of us can "enjoy" preparing our taxes, but I know a few tricks that can help take the dread out of it. Last year I set up a tax document system for a client. This month as we met and prepared her paperwork, she commented, "That was too easy!" It made her a little nervous, because it's normally a much more arduous task. Were we leaving something out? Nope; she just had the tools to make the task more manageable.

If you're one of the many who find themselves in a panic trying to locate all the numbers and documents your CPA requires, I'm afraid it's a little late for this year's taxes, but once you have them together, don't stash them away until you follow these steps to prepare for next year.

Go to [www.irs.com/articles/tax-form-checklist](http://www.irs.com/articles/tax-form-checklist) or call me for a hard copy of the IRS Tax Form Checklist. Highlight all the categories that relate to your current situation. Match them with the list of documents your accountant required for this year's tax preparation. This is a starting point for knowing what you need to collect for next year's taxes.

Things change over time, so watch for new deductions for which you might qualify. For instance, if you have a rough

year health-wise, you may qualify for a deduction for medical expenses (must surpass 10 percent of your adjusted gross income, unless self-employed). If you started a home business, you can deduct a portion of the cost of your utilities. Teachers who spend their own money on classroom materials (which is all the teachers I know), receive an above-the-line tax deduction for those expenses. Child care, relocating, cost of financial planning, these all have deductions for those who itemize and qualify. Always allow your accountant and/or legal counsel have the final say on your personal and business taxes.

Create a spreadsheet called Tax Document Template with a list of each of the categories applicable to your tax needs. On Sheet 1 list the documents you need each year (W2, Social Security Statements, Mortgage Interest Statement, etc.) and have a checkmark column to check them off as you receive them. These normally arrive in January following the tax year.

Also, include on Sheet 1 a column for categories like Donations, Medical Expenses, Taxes Paid, etc. Have a "\$ Amount" column next to it to fill in your totals. You may use additional sheets to tally entries throughout the year for categories like Do-

Please see **TAXES** on P. 13

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*The Frequency of Noise*

Hello, 93636,  
Today I would like to tell you about a recent occurrence that happened at my shop and how a new technology developed in Europe saved the day. Before that I would like to take a brief moment to speak to the 93636 females who maybe reading my "In Good Hands" column. Ladies, you represent 70 percent of the goods and services purchased from my industry. Please, don't hesitate to contact me. I would love to include

and answer your questions in future articles.

Last month a new customer came into the shop complaining of an intermittent popping noise during braking and/or accelera-

tion. His vehicle was involved in a front-end collision and the noise began after the vehicle repair.

*Not The Best Start*

This is definitely not the kind of diagnostic I would prefer when beginning a new customer relationship. Modern vehicles have so many components crammed into tight spaces, especially under the hood, it's extremely difficult to detect the cause of unwanted noises. Noises echo and resonate. Hollow components act like megaphones. Vehicle noises, especially intermittent noises, are among the most difficult complaints to solve. This vehicle is a luxury vehicle and a misdiagnosis or incorrect guess would be very expensive. Most of you know by now that I constantly preach about my dislike for guessing. Testing is much more efficient. Automobiles are engineered by human beings using math and science. Therefore, math and science hold the solution to our diagnostic.

Recently I attended two NVH (Noise, Vibration, Harshness) training classes designed to aid in the diagnostic of noise, vibration and harshness complaints. The new Pico

technology uses remote sensors (accelerometers), software, a microphone and laptop to measure and locate the sources of NVH complaints. When the sensors retrieve sounds and/or vibrations, the technology creates a waveform on the laptop screen. The taller the waveform the more harsh or closer the sound or vibration source is. The technology also displays the waveform's oscillations indicating the frequency of the noise. The closer the oscillations, the higher the frequency.

*Making Sense of Frequency*

When driving down the road, the engine assembly, drive shaft assembly and tires are all rotating at different speeds or frequencies. Let's do the math at 60 miles per hour. If the circumference of a tire measures 72 inches (6 feet), we divide 6 feet into

*The new technology put us right on the problem with no mistakes. It is much more fun being an automotive technician today than at any time in my past.*

5,280 feet (one mile) and our tire rotates 880 times per mile or 14.66 rotations per second (14.66 Hz). If the differential gear ratio is 3:33, the transmission output shaft and drive shaft rotates

three times for every one rotation of the wheel, or 45 Hz. At 1,800 rpm, the engine is rotating 30 times per second or 30 Hz. At 60 miles per hour, the wheel speed is 15 Hz, the drive shaft speed is 45 Hz and the engine speed is 30 Hz. It's a math problem. The NVH module is connected to engine RPM and we program in the differential gear ratio and tire size. The NVH does the calculation and determines the potential causes based on frequencies. In this example, if our undesired noise is measured at 15Hz, we have narrowed our focus to components (tire, wheel bearings, brake rotor, axle, carrier bearings and ring gear) connected to the wheel. By moving the sensors around, we can zero in on the location of the vibration. The NVH technology can also differentiate between simultaneous vibrations occurring from different component assemblies.

In our case, we were attempting to locate a popping noise which requires a little different diagnostic process. We placed one sensor on the driver's seat rail and the other near the collision repairs. When the pop

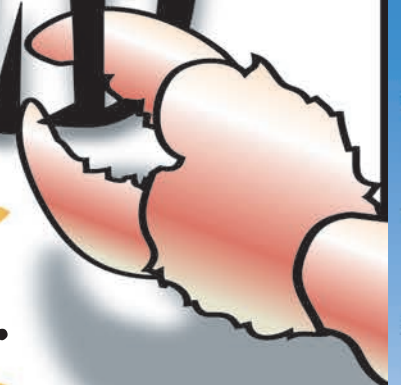
Please see **HANDS** on P. 14

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# The 14th Annual Chamber

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## Call the Chamber for more information. 645-4001

### New Chamber Members

The Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce would like to welcome the newest member to the Madera Ranchos business family

**M. Noelle Guthrie**  
*Keller Williams Realty*

**Karen McCaffrey**  
*The McCaffrey Group*

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You can *STILL* be a sponsor. Call 645-4001.

The Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce would love to see you at our next meeting, always the second Wednesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. 37167 Ave. 12 Suite 5C. Call us at 645-4001.

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## Senior Report

### Events Never End at the Senior Center

By Patti Groh

I hope there is no flooding going on around your house. I have seen a lot of BIG puddles and I've managed to avoid most of them. I've gotten splashed by drivers going through some too fast, though. Some people don't want to slow down for anything.

On Jan. 28 we had our second Soup and Sandwich Luncheon. Senior members hosted tomato tortellini soup and croissant sandwiches followed by different kinds of homemade cookies for dessert. Thank you to all the hostesses, bakers, set-up and tear-down staff and "chefs" for your hard work in making it a success. A special thank you to Don Foster who provided the sound system and to Victoria Shulte who entertained with her great singing. Her singing was no surprise to her grandmother-in-law, Joliene Mason. Big winners of the day were Nancy Palazzo who won the door prize and Verlin Dill who won the 50/50.

St. Patrick's Day is March 17. We've been throwing around ideas for a corned beef and cabbage dinner. We haven't finalized anything yet, so if you have thoughts/ideas about it, write them down and place them in the suggestion box at the Center or talk to President Verlaine Elinburg.

The next day, Saturday, March 18, the birthday and anniversary lunch will be held at DiCicco's in Fresno. Sign up at the Center and be at the restaurant at 11:15 a.m. It doesn't have to be your birthday or anniversary to attend, just come to celebrate others, have a great lunch and

social occasion.

Just a reminder that daylight savings begins on Sunday, March 12. That means "spring forward" one hour. Our poor body time-clocks have to adjust again.

The Home and Garden Festival is fast approaching. It is Saturday, April 8. (I do hope the field behind the Center has dried out some by then.) We are looking for vendors for that event. If you, or anyone you know, has items you might like to offer-up for sale, please call the Center. Anything like crafts, painting, jewelry, candles, knitting/crochet or used items can be sold. We also welcome information booths. Please be imaginative and help us think of who we can invite to participate.

For those who are new and may not know, the Ranchos/Hills Seniors Center has exercise class every M-W-F from 10 to 11 a.m. Lunch is served M-F at 11:30 a.m. You must let Joann know before 11:15 a.m. the day before you plan on eating there. The phone number at the Center is 645-4864. There are card games most afternoons at the Center. Joann can give you more information on that, too. Or pick up a newsletter at local businesses. Thursday evening is potluck at the Center, starting at 6 p.m. Afterward there are card games again. It doesn't have to be card games only. Any board games can be entertained.

There may still be some tickets available for Bunco. It starts at 2 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 25, is \$25 with prizes and food. Call the Center quickly and inquire.

## TAXES cont. from P. 10

nations, Childcare, etc.

Once your template is complete, "Save As" and label it 2017 Taxes. Print it out or manage it on the computer. As documents, statements, and receipts arrive check them off and/or record the amounts.

Use your spreadsheet categories as a guide to create folders to store the tax documents. Choose a file drawer, file tote, accordion file or digital file to store all your tax document folders. Decide that this will be the ONLY place you'll put them and that you'll file them immediately upon receipt.

At the end of 2017, it will be easy to add up your totals (especially if you do it on the computer) and you'll have all your backup documents in one place — ready to go! Of course, you can do the same process on paper without spreadsheets but, besides doing the adding for you, it also means you have 2018's check-off sheet ready at the click of a finger. Just go back to your Tax Document Template, make any adjustments needed and "Save As" 2018 Taxes. If it still feels overwhelming, give me a call — I can make your taxes "too easy" too.

Contact Organized by Choice (because things don't always fall into place) at P.O. Box 26152, Fresno, CA 93729, call 559-871-3314 or email [info@organizedby-choice.com](mailto:info@organizedby-choice.com). You can also visit their website at [www.organizedbychoice.com](http://www.organizedbychoice.com).

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# SEM CU speaks

## Elections March 20

By Jeff McGrath

It "takes a village."  
The opening title to a book penned by former First Lady, Hillary Clinton. While I have never read the book, I have always thought that the title applies to many things in our daily life.

SEM CU (South-East Madera County United) embarks on its 18th year of existence. What started out as the Highway 41 Corridor Alliance – a corporation to promote the general welfare and prosperity of the Rolling Hills area – has metamorphized into two distinct organizations that advocate for South-East Madera. SEMCU, Inc. is a 501(c)6 nonprofit organization which advocates for the community, such as being a voting member on the Regional Water Management Group. Then there is the SEMCU Foundation, a 501(c)3 organization that can raise funds for improv-

*Find out what is going on and how you can get involved or you can do nothing and watch as your community gets left behind.*

ing South-East Madera as we have done with the State Low-Flow Grant to help reduce our water consumption. We have raised funds and installed over 25 drain wells, which allows surface water into our aquifer. We have a paid grant writer that currently has over \$9,000,000 in grants pending with over \$980,000 awarded.

There is much to do in this community and if we do not make our voice heard with the County and State, we will be left out. Which brings me back to the opening statement: it does "take a village" to get things done.

With general elections coming up March 20, I urge you to make time and attend one or more meetings that benefit your community. Find out what is going on and how you can get involved or you can do nothing and watch as your community gets left behind. There are openings on the following committees: Parks, Water, Library, Roads, Schools and Grants.

We meet every third Monday of the month at 6 p.m. at the Ranchos Pizza Factory, 37184 Ave 12. Come down and be a part.

*Please call us at 559-363-9095 with any questions or visit our website at [www.semcu.org](http://www.semcu.org).*

## HANDS cont. from P. 11

occurs the sensor nearest the noise creates the tallest waveform. We just kept moving the sensors until they were one foot apart. In between were a lower control arm bushing and a body mount bushing. To determine which bushing was defective, we placed the sensors on the inside and outside of each. A bushing consists of three parts: the outer steel ring, the smaller inner steel ring and the rubber cushion in-between. The rubber cushion is designed to absorb vibrations, not transfer them. If our sensor waveforms are similar, the rubber failed to absorb. If the waveforms are dissimilar the rubber was successful.

We found it.  
The body mount was our cause. The new technology put us right on the

problem with no mistakes. It is much more fun being an automotive technician today than at any time in my past.

The technology does come with a steep learning curve and my explanation may be an over-simplification but no guessing is required. That's all for today. Hope this article is informative and helpful.

As always, I am looking for interesting things to write about so I would appreciate any input, suggestions or questions you may have concerning your automobile or the automotive industry. I can be contacted at [complete\\_car\\_care@hotmail.com](mailto:complete_car_care@hotmail.com) or Facebook me at Complete Car Care.

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Due to the weed regrowth and the continual hazard throughout the summer HAZARD ABATEMENT MUST BE MAINTAINED THROUGHOUT THE FIRE SEASON. This may require REDISCING/HAZARD ABATEMENT MORE THAN ONCE AS WEEDS AND HAZARDS MAY RETURN.

2/17

**Who's got 1980's prices?**



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Got broken screens? Madera Glass & Mirror has the expertise to make quick work of any screen repair.

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## Free Money Costs Too Much!

By Betty Van Valkenburg

It's a beautiful thing, isn't it? Government entities dole out "free" money in the form of grants. One small problem, though, is that they don't have the money to give. The U.S. government is almost \$20 trillion in debt and California owes over \$450 billion, yet somehow they can grant money to states, counties and cities. They also fund, through grants, unelected regional governments – such as the Fresno Council of Governments – that most people know little or nothing about but which have a great deal of power. These regional governments, funded by grants, then give grants to other entities. Talk about a circular firing squad.

The more insidious problem, however, is that the grants always and purposely come with tightly tied strings attached. Grant money can be spent only for the program or purpose pre-determined by the bureaucracy giving the grant. The money may be "free," but our elected local officials are not free to spend it as they and their constituents deem best for their communities.

Voila! Somewhere, some time, some politicians realized they could force their agenda onto unsuspecting states, cities and counties by offering free money. Who could refuse that? And why should politicians stick their necks out to pass unpopular laws when they can buy compliance using the people's own money or money borrowed, with interest, from China?

My first experience with grant money's ugly truth occurred many years ago when a principal was excited that his small school received a grant of over \$4,000. However, the money had to be spent for a specific program which the principal admitted the school did not need, and a grant writer (teacher) had to be paid for hours of work to access the grant. My question was: Why plead for and accept money to pay for something you don't even need? Answer: Because the money is there and if we don't take it someone else will.

And therein lies the greatest problem: Some local politicians find it easier to go along than to refuse the so-called free money for wasteful or harmful programs they otherwise would oppose. Also, some cities find their budgets so beholden to grant money that their councils and mayors have actual discretion over as little as, I'm told, 25 percent of the city's spending. They have become in many cases, sadly, mere administrators of the dictates and guidelines from



far-away bureaucracies pushing their latest pet projects – usually tied to climate change hysteria.

Now every entity that receives Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funds is being forced to implement the latest federal intrusion, the Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH) Rule Guidebook. Of course, all grant proposals are given great-sounding names. Who would oppose "fair" housing or espouse "unfair" housing? But the name is misleading in the extreme.

Tom DeWeese of AmericanPolicy.org calls AFFH "social engineering at its worst" and makes these disturbing points: "It requires every community that applies for HUD grants to perform massive demographic analyses locally and regionally ... of every neighborhood every five years! HUD will search the records of every person in each neighborhood for income levels, race, color, religion, national origin and much more. HUD is already pouring over the latest census reports to map out their strategy for your neighborhood. AFFH is a top-down dictatorship that destroys local control."

John Anthony of SustainableFreedomLab.org says: "One of our biggest concerns was HUD's new data maps. Once the maps are incorporated into local plans, the agency then manages enough of the community's zoning and population distribution to merge the community into an autonomous region. AFFH uses legal actions against communities that accept popular HUD grants, to force them into a bizarre, centrally managed program of regionalism and forced socio-economic integration. AFFH's use of litigation threats is becoming a widespread enforcement tool of the agency."

But hope is on the horizon. There are companion bills in the House and Senate that would defund AFFH and restore local rule to cities and counties, and which President Trump has promised to sign if enacted: "The Local Zoning Decisions Protection Act" (S. 103) (H.R.482).

Please call your member of congress and urge a yes vote on the bill, and of course it's important to stay in touch with your local council members, mayors and supervisors who are on the front lines. For more information on AFFH, you can consult the websites cited above, where you might sign a petition and/or sign up to receive emails.

For information and resources, please visit [www.teapartypatriots.org](http://www.teapartypatriots.org).

LETTERS cont. from P. 4

are allotted to response time, equipment and personnel. Availability of water and access to water accounts for 40 points and 10 points for communication.

13. Approximately \$235,000+ paid to a private consultant using taxpayer money to campaign for Measure L – money linked to CAL FIRE Union Local 2881 that provides campaign funding for Measure L – linked to state employees (paid by your tax dollars) – linked to Madera County Board of Supervisors.

Measure L supports irresponsibility. Adequate fire protection can be provided by putting an end to irresponsible frivolous spending and poor decisions and not by burdening struggling families and seniors on fixed incomes with increased taxes.

Vote no on Measure L. For more information, go to [www.NoOnMeasureL.org](http://www.NoOnMeasureL.org).

Terre Sparkman  
Oakhurst

Dear Editor:

Here's why I'm voting No on Measure L.

The primary role of government, whether national, state or local, is to protect its citizens and enforce the law. As such, fire and police protection should be the first priority of our County's discretionary funds. Without safety and protection nothing else matters.

But first means "first." Spending on fire and crime protection should not be subordinate to increasing County workers' salaries and pensions by millions over the past two years, and not subordinate to other County spending projects such as the proposed spending of over a million dollars on a Madera County monument sign off Highway 41; \$311,000 to help finance an OHV park or leasing this property and opening up the County for massive liability suits; \$185,000 to hire a consultant to tell Madera taxpayers they need to accept Measure L; over \$100,000 for a special March 7, 2017 election and other frivolous discretionary spending.

I recently received my 70-page Voter Guide for the March 7, 2017 special election. Seventy pages! The June 7, 2016 voters' guide I received only had 60 pages and covered multiple propositions, a whole slew of candidates and Measure C, the \$485 million bond for State Center Colleges. Measure C will generate more than double the projected \$164 million from this sales tax, and yet got 1/3 the coverage of Measure L. This voter guide read like a propaganda piece in favor of Measure L and, in my opinion, a form of electioneering and a complete waste of \$100,000 of taxpayer money!

ISO Fears: The major reason the ISO rates increased in 2015 for some property owners was because the Madera County Fire Department didn't provide ISO with the requested in-

formation by the cutoff date. (Ref: Madera County Fire Marshal Deborah Keenan before BOS in April/2015). Now that those have been filed, the County's ISO rates will adjust downward. Madera county cannot guarantee property insurance rates will decrease if Measure L passes.

Government can never tax its way out of a problem. Giving more tax to bureaucrats is like giving drugs to an addict. If Measure L passes it will only fund 25 percent of what the County fire fighters need to fully man all fire stations. Pennies per day add up to massive debt. Next will come another scheme to take more of your money.

Higher taxes discourage people from moving or doing business in an area. People vote with their feet and wallets. According to the current statewide sales tax rates in California, if Madera County passes a 1 percent sales tax increase, the County sales tax in unincorporated areas will be 8.75 percent. That would be one of the highest in the state – higher than San Francisco or the Central Coast — and Madera County is a poor county.

Madera residents are already facing increasing taxes and fees such as the fire tax, the recently passed Measure C bond, a 12 percent increase in trash fees, a car registration fee increase of \$65 per car which will go into effect in July, a 42 percent increase in gas taxes, not to mention the previous bond measure on elementary, high school, State Center Community College and other bond measures and special assessments passed by voters in previous years.

Solution: It is not the role of government to run businesses, but to encourage them. County governments, like households, need to operate within their budgets and come up with creative ideas to bring businesses to our county by keeping regulation and taxes at a minimum. Raising our sales tax will hurt this effort.

For more information go to [www.NoOnMeasureL.org](http://www.NoOnMeasureL.org).

John Pero  
Oakhurst

*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. The only rules? Sign it, be civil or forget about it.*

Send your letters to:  
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mail:

**The Ranchos Independent**

**37167 Ave. 12 #5C**

**Madera, CA 93636**

fax:

**559-645-4002**

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For more information contact:

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Diana Mendoza  
at 559-355-6109  
or Stephanie Workman  
at 559-709-1477



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ANSWERS

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## Free Tax Prep

Free income tax return preparation and electronic filing for both state and federal returns will be available again this year for Madera-area residents, offered by the AARP Tax-Aide program. Services are provided free of all costs and charges. Tax returns are prepared by specially trained and certified volunteers. The returns are prepared on site and then electronically filed the same day. Tax help is offered to persons of all ages. Last year, Tax Aide prepared first tax returns for several 17 and 18-year-old students who had their first jobs.

- **Oakhurst Library** -- Tuesdays between Feb. 10 and April 7. Call Brian at 559-285-1494.
- **City of Madera**, 711 Nebraska -- Thursdays between Feb. 2 and April 6. Call Sarah at 559-675-7871.
- **City of Chowchilla** -- Two Mondays. Call Sarah at 559-675-7871.

## AARP Tax-Aide Seeks Volunteers

AARP Foundation Tax-Aide is seeking volunteers to help Madera County taxpayers in preparing and filing their 2016 federal and state income tax returns. There is a role for anyone who wants to help from tax return preparers, technology wizards, volunteers who enjoy greeting, answering calls and questions, and scheduling appointments.

**Contact Bob Musick at 559-675-1760 or Darlene at 559 760-0404 or go to [www.aarp.org/tavolunteer](http://www.aarp.org/tavolunteer).**

AARP Tax-Aide is the nation's largest free, volunteer-run tax assistance and preparation service available to taxpayers with low- and moderate income, with special attention to those aged 60 and older.

Click on "Local News" at

## GO FIGURE! by Linda Thistle

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

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## SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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## Say you saw it in the Ranchos Independent

**Strange BUT TRUE**  
By Samantha Weaver

- It was world-renowned American photographer Ansel Adams who made the following sage observation: "It is horrifying that we have to fight our own government to save the environment."
- You might be surprised to learn that

the blood of a grasshopper is white.

- Tacumbu prison in Asuncion, Paraguay, is notorious for its overcrowded conditions: 3,500 inmates are crowded into a space designed for half that number, and many of them sleep on cardboard directly on the floor. One inmate, however, until recently enjoyed amenities that many outside the prison walls would love to have. Drug trafficker Chimenes Pavao bribed officials to look the other way, then set up a fully furnished, tastefully decorated three-room suite, complete with air conditioning, a refrigerator, a library, a flat-screen TV, a DVD player and a treadmill. The luxury cell was discovered when a bomb threat caused police to search the entire prison.
- If you've ever been the victim of a purse-snatching, here's a discouraging bit of information: Those who study such things say that four out of five perpetrators get away.
- In 1804 our planet hit a milestone: a population of 1 billion people. It took 123 years to add another billion, then only 33 more to get to 3 billion, in 1960. We

crossed the 4 billion mark in 1974, hit 5 billion in 1987, and got to 6 billion in 1999. In 2011 (or early 2012, depending on who's doing the estimating, the earth's population passed 7 billion, and those who study such things expect us to get to 8 billion sometime in the mid- to late 2020s.

- Thought for the Day: "Justice will not be served until those who are unaffected are as outraged as those who are."  
Benjamin Franklin

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## Just Like Cats &amp; Dogs

by Dave T. Phipps



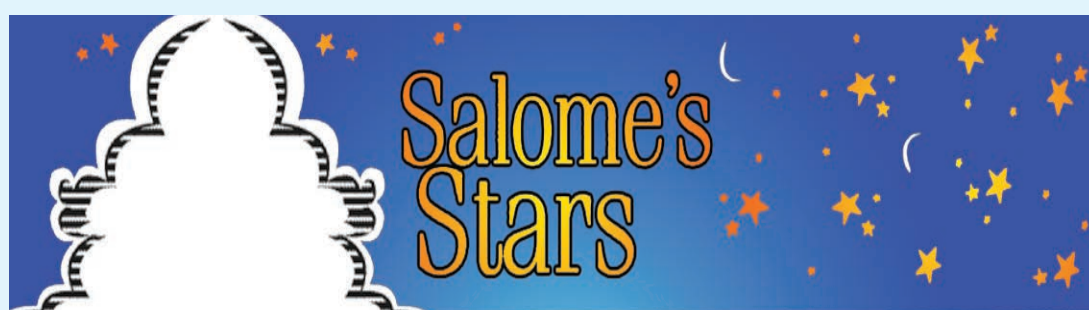
**Plumbing problem?  
Plumbing solution!  
Call Vern!**  
**DAVIS PLUMBING • 559-977-6289**  
**Lic. #842676**

## GRIN and BEAR IT



"Try not to talk... I don't like what you say."

www.TheRanchos.com



**ARIES** (March 21 to April 19) You're correct to want to help someone who seems to need assistance. But be careful that he or she isn't pulling the wool over those gorgeous Sheep's eyes. You need more facts.

**TAURUS** (April 20 to May 20) Your Bovine optimism soon will dispel the gloom cast by those naysayers and pessimists who still hover close by. Also, that good news you recently received is part of a fuller message to come.

**GEMINI** (May 21 to June 20) Feeling jealous over a colleague's success drains the energy you need to meet your own challenges. Wish him or her well, and focus on what you need to do. Results start to show in mid-March.

**CANCER** (June 21 to July 22) You're likely to feel somewhat Crabby these days, so watch what you say, or you could find yourself making lots of apologies. Your mood starts to brighten by the weekend.

**LEO** (July 23 to August 22) Your pride might still be hurting from those unflattering remarks someone made about you. But cheer up, you're about to prove once again why you're the Top Cat in whatever you do.

**VIRGO** (August 23 to September 22) A misunderstanding with a co-worker could become a real problem unless it's resolved soon. Allow a third party to come in and assess the situation without pressure or prejudice.

**LIBRA** (September 23 to October 22) Call a family meeting to discuss the care of a loved one at this difficult time. Be careful not to let yourself be pushed into shouldering the full burden on your own.

**SCORPIO** (October 23 to November 21) An upcoming decision could open the way to an exciting venture. However, there are some risks you should know about. Ask more questions before making a commitment.

**SAGITTARIUS** (November 22 to December 21) Personal matters need your attention during the earlier part of the week; shift focus to your workaday world by midweek. Friday brings news.

**CAPRICORN** (December 22 to January 19) You've been going at a hectic pace for quite a while. It's time now for some much-needed rest and recreation to recharge those hardworking batteries.

**AQUARIUS** (January 20 to February 18) It's time to upgrade your current skills or get into an entirely different training program so that you can be prepared for new career opportunities.

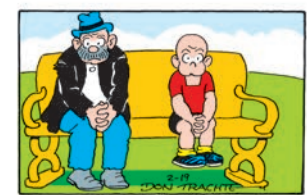
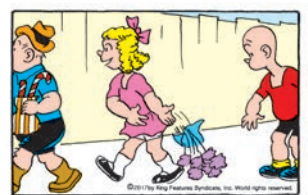
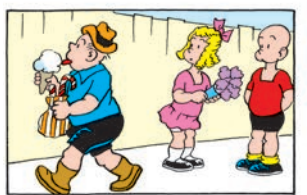
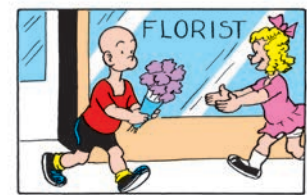
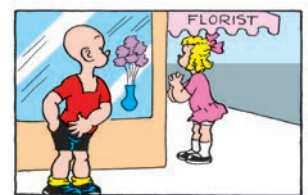
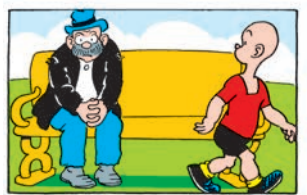
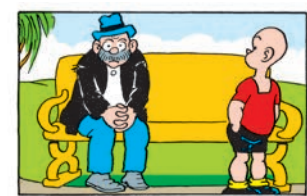
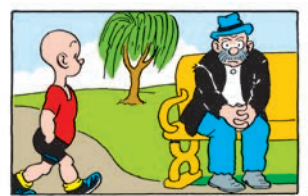
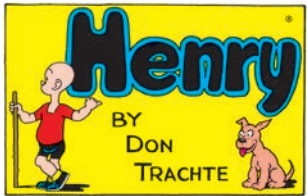
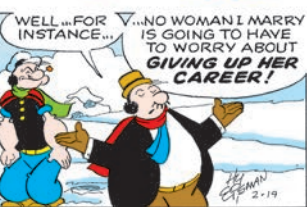
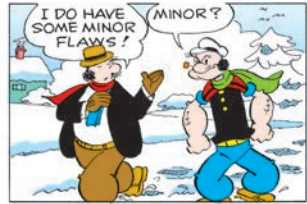
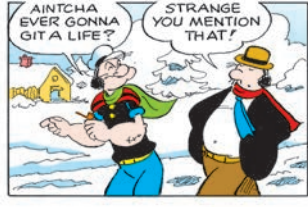
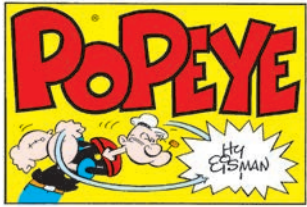
**PISCES** (February 19 to March 20) Keep a low profile in order to avoid being lured away from the job at hand. Focus on what has to be done, and do it. There'll be time later to enjoy fun with family and friends.

## Born this Week

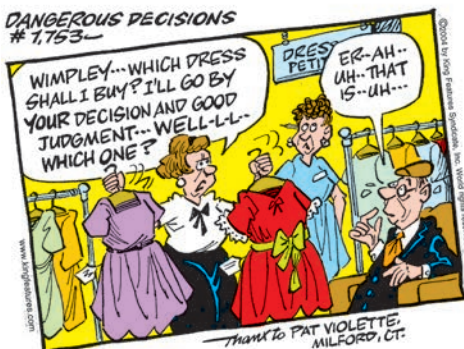
You can be a dreamer and a realist. You dream of what you would like to do, and then you face the reality of how to do it.

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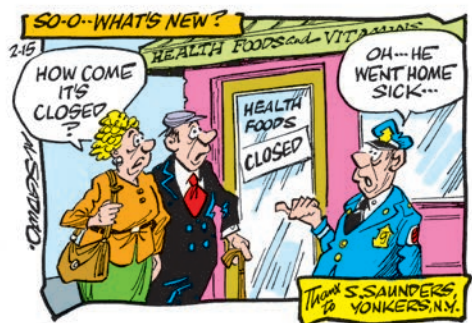
# FUN PAGES



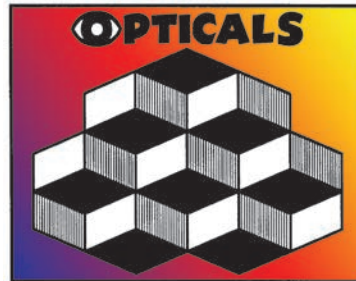
## THEY'LL DO IT EVERY TIME



## BY AL SCADUTO



**TV INFO**  
JUST FOR YOU—  
TUNING IN ON  
THE PERT  
ECONOMIST AS  
SHE GIVES OUT  
WITH HOME-  
MAKING IDEAS  
YOU'VE USED  
FOR YEARS—  
Thank to  
B. ROSAMOND,  
MINNEAPOLIS, MINN.



**AN EYE TEST!** Look at the above drawing and count the number of cubes. Are there six, or seven?

Answer: Look at it long enough and you'll see both six and seven.



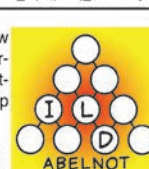
**A BOVINE BAFFLER!**  
Try to solve these five Ladder Puzzles before Bossy finishes her evening meal. You are given a word that must be changed into another word in a series of moves. During each move, you must change one letter in the previous word, so as to form a new word. In our example, we changed BARN to DOOR in four moves. See if you can change the following words in four moves each:

1. COOK to WARE
2. HAND to SOME
3. LAME to DUCK
4. MENU to FOOD
5. PARE to DOWN



**FIND THE HIDDEN CITY** in this man's sentence.  
Answer: The city is Toronto.

**CHAIN REACTION!** Take the seven letters printed below our diagram and place them in the circles so that eight four-letter words can be read, top to bottom, along the connecting lines. All the words will begin with the letter in the top circle.



Answers: Top to bottom, left to right: Bath, ball, bald, ball, bold, bond, bone.

## Wishing Well®

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

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

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## MAGIC MAZE ● — FEET

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

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

Acre	Crow's	Happy	Tender
Board	Cubic	On your	Two left
Cloven	Drag your	Pigs'	Webbed
Cold	Flat	Square	

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## TRIVIA TEST

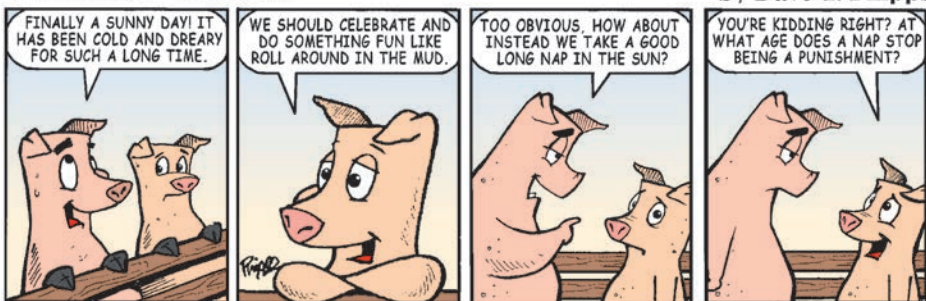
By Fifi Rodriguez

1. ANATOMY: Where would Haversian canals be located in the human body?
2. MOVIES: Which star of early "Tarzan" movies was a gold-medal winner in the 1924 and 1928 Olympics?
3. GEOGRAPHY: In what body of water do the Comoros islands lie?
4. FOOD & DRINK: What cooking term is Italian for "to the tooth"?
5. MUSIC: Which of Beethoven's symphonies also is known as the "Pastoral Symphony"?
6. COMICS: What profession did Blondie take up in the comic strip in the 1990s?
7. GENERAL KNOWLEDGE: Where would someone be located in the United States in an area often described locally as "down east"?
8. U.S. PRESIDENTS: Who was the only president to serve nonconsecutive terms?
9. LITERATURE: What is the literary genre described by Jonathan Swift as "a glass wherein beholders discover everybody's face but their own"?
10. GEOMETRY: How many sides does a rhombus have?

- Answers**
1. The bones
  2. Johnny Weissmuller won five gold medals in freestyle swimming contests.
  3. Indian Ocean
  4. Al dente
  5. Symphony No. 6
  6. Catering business
  7. Eastern New England
  8. Grover Cleveland served as president in 1885 and 1893
  9. Satire
  10. Four

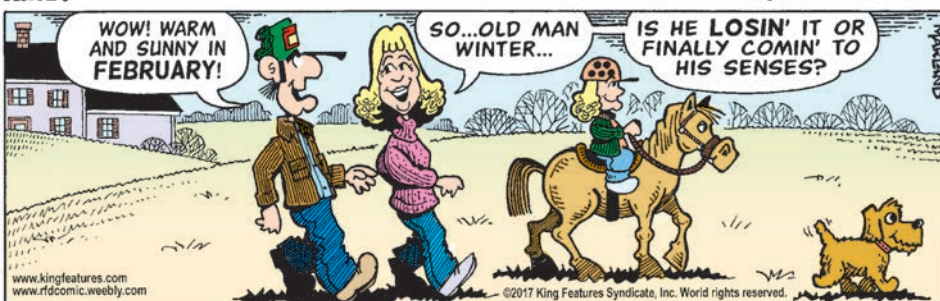
### Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps



### R.F.D.

by Mike Marland



### Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas



### The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



### Intelligent Life

by David Reddick



### HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTIHOFF

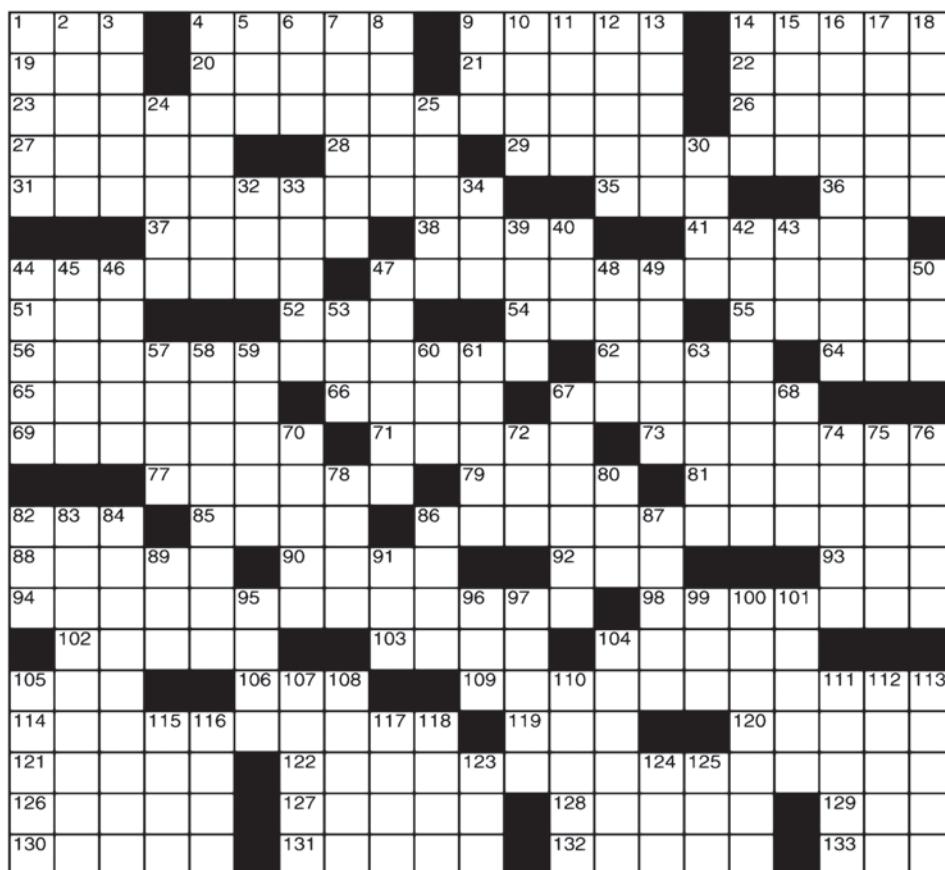
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Find at least six differences in details between panels. Differences: 1. Bird is missing. 2. Dinosaur is missing. 3. Arm is moved. 4. Soda can is missing. 5. Portrait is missing. 6. Plant is different.

www.TheRanchos.com

## Super Crossword



- ACROSS**
- 1 Seer's "gift," for short
  - 4 Pig noise
  - 9 Tosses out
  - 14 Some choir women
  - 19 With 74-Down, "Such gall!"
  - 20 Tree-topping ax wielder
  - 21 Expiate, with "for"
  - 22 Statue of Liberty feature
  - 23 African beast submerged?
  - 26 Ranch rope
  - 27 Unit of Time
  - 28 Park or Fifth: Abbr.
  - 29 Like partially spoiled oil?
  - 31 Five-alarm, for one?
  - 35 Mao — -tung
  - 36 British isle
  - 37 Slyly derisive
  - 38 Mocked by imitating
  - 41 Humdrum
  - 44 Amor or Eros
  - 47 Magic lamp owner's language?
  - 51 Purpose
  - 52 Property unit
  - 54 Hereditary unit
  - 55 Daphnis' lover
  - 56 Tan-colored door security feature?
  - 62 Banknotes
  - 64 Wichita-to-Akron dir.
  - 65 Fueled (up)
  - 66 Tennille or Braxton
  - 67 "Misty" crooner
  - 69 Hero of Sophocles' "Electra"
  - 71 It's hidden in this puzzle's 10 longest answers
  - 73 Native of Cuba's capital
  - 77 Fail to do as promised
  - 79 Watson of "The Bling Ring"
  - 81 Texas border city
  - 82 "The Simpsons" clerk
  - 85 Q-V link
  - 86 Snap-on parts of a tot's tote?
  - 88 Friend of the Lone Ranger
  - 90 Tenderfoot
  - 92 Do injury to
  - 93 Jockey (for)
  - 94 "Farewell, Ms. Clooney!"?
  - 98 Wading birds
  - 102 Raccoon relative
  - 103 Israel's Eban
  - 104 Texas city near Dallas
  - 105 Dick — Dyke
  - 106 Washroom, informally
  - 109 Thoroughly clean some sour fruit?
  - 114 Tune about Houdini?
  - 119 Several eras
  - 120 Flat piece of microfilm
  - 121 Flat, as pop
  - 122 Cause Reagan to digress?
  - 126 By itself
  - 127 Without — (worry-free)
  - 128 Sandbank
  - 129 Thigh's place city
  - 130 Fiery feeling
  - 131 Faked out, in ice hockey
  - 132 Utilized a keypad
  - 133 "What — the odds?"
  - 4 Providing with footwear
  - 5 Modern, in Münster
  - 6 Rent-to- —
  - 7 Adjust on a timeline
  - 8 — Fountain (Rome landmark)
  - 9 Skull bone
  - 10 Great Salt Lake's state
  - 11 — moment too soon
  - 12 Honored a king, maybe
  - 13 Bondmen
  - 14 Razor name
  - 15 Pork cut
  - 16 Like phone calls and outlines
  - 17 1 followed by 27 zeros
  - 18 Like arbors
  - 24 Living proof?
  - 25 Relating to the kidneys
  - 30 McEntire of country
  - 32 — Grande
  - 33 Confound
  - 34 Scholastic meas.
  - 39 Sword part
  - 40 Pres. before JFK
  - 42 Of a large store of data
  - 43 Opposite of "yep"
  - 44 "Hasta —!" (Spanish "Later!")
  - 45 Often-quoted Wilde
  - 46 Sonnet, e.g.
  - 47 In one's own house
  - 48 Peruvian of yore
  - 49 Below, in a 46-Down
  - 50 "Meh" mark
  - 53 Decide
  - 57 Pre-'91 empire
  - 58 Fade away
  - 59 Xanadus
  - 60 Lover of Lennon
  - 61 Top part of some forms
  - 63 Intend to
  - 67 "Well, I declare!"
  - 68 Actress Mia
  - 70 Brawl
  - 72 Diplomat's bldg.
  - 74 See 19-Across
  - 75 Allow to enter
  - 76 Snoots
  - 78 Fellas
  - 80 Toothpaste box org.
  - 82 — loss for words
  - 83 Many a Net radio host
  - 84 Teamster ID
  - 86 Utterly fail
  - 87 Toothbrush brand
  - 89 Pekoe, e.g.
  - 91 Irish actor Stephen
  - 95 Annoy
  - 96 Crunches crunch them
  - 97 Slot car, say
  - 99 Kilmer of "Top Gun"
  - 100 Not divided into parts
  - 101 "— Thro' the Rye"
  - 104 Forceful
  - 105 Line of motor scooters
  - 107 President of Syria
  - 108 Verbalize
  - 110 Be
  - 111 City NNE of Tampa
  - 112 N.J. Devil, e.g.
  - 113 Swamp plant
  - 115 As well
  - 116 Look keenly
  - 117 Neighbor of Mont.
  - 118 Actor Richard
  - 123 TV's Turner
  - 124 Keystone policeman
  - 125 Carly — Jepsen
- DOWN**
- 1 Set of values
  - 2 — kebab
  - 3 Giant in soda

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# FUN PAGES



# SEM CU

SOUTH EAST MADERA COUNTY UNITED

## Annual Membership Meeting

MONDAY, MARCH 20 • 6 P.M.

**Election of Board Members will be held**  
**PARTICIPATION and NOMINATIONS are WELCOMED**

Be a part of the exciting projects SEMCU is working on by bringing Grant Money to the Ranchos.  
All members of the public are encouraged to participate.  
Come and provide input on the projects you think are necessary for our community.



Community Parks



Water Issues



Local Schools



Area Infrastructure



Sustainability

**Attend and make your voice heard!**  
**Help make a positive impact on our community**

### Ranchos Pizza Factory

37184 Avenue 12 #101 • Madera Ranchos

*All regular meetings are held on the 3rd Monday of each month at the Ranchos Pizza Factory*

**SEM CU – Working on a Sustainable Future**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

**559-363-9095 • [www.semcu.org](http://www.semcu.org) • [info@semcu.org](mailto:info@semcu.org)**