

The Ranchos Independent



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That Sinking Feeling

**Extreme weather
in the Ranchos
takes its toll
on local roads**

Photo Courtesy of Don Foster

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Watery “Sinking Feeling” Overwhelms Key Ranchos Road



Before - Although not officially a sinkhole, it sure looks like one to an unidentified Ranchos resident. The result of an overwhelmed, 80-year-old pipeline, this stretch of Road 36 was shut down on Dec. 29 after taking a big rig and two other vehicles out first.

By Christi McKinney

The end of 2010 was a wet and wild one in the Madera Ranchos. The last rain storm of the year dumped over an inch of rain on the Ranchos overnight in a heavy storm that lasted all night on Tuesday, Dec. 28. The much needed rain caused more than a dozen flood-related road closures in Madera County alone, but none more dramatic than what initially appeared to be a sinkhole in the middle of Road 36 near Avenue 11. What began as a pothole on Wednesday, Dec. 29 quickly grew to encompass most of both lanes of Road 36.

A Dangerous Angle

What made the hole especially dangerous was that when approaching it from either direction on Road 36, the angle made it difficult to determine the size, the depth or the danger that the hole presented until it was too late. At least three drivers found this out the hard way and drove right into

the hole, damaging their vehicles before county road crews could arrive to setup barricades.

A big rig was the first casualty. The unidentified truck driver felt that the weight of his truck made the hole much bigger than it had been just before two other vehicles drove into it. The second casualty was a woman who was returning from the grocery store in a truck she'd borrowed from her brother. Luckily she wasn't hurt but she reported being shaken up and having groceries flying all over the place. The borrowed truck didn't fare so well. It ended up with two flat tires. The third vehicle approached from the opposite direction and also ended up with a flat tire.

The big rig truck driver quickly blocked off the road to traffic until county road crews arrived and when they did arrive work crews were forced to shut down Road 36 between Avenues 9 and 12. The closure caused traffic headaches for Ranchos residents who use Road 36 to connect



After - Completely repaired by Madera County and open for business in less than two weeks, you'd never know there was a hole large enough to swallow a big rig on this stretch of Road 36 between Avenue 9 and Avenue 12.

with Children's Boulevard, Freeway 41 or Freeway 99 on what the county has identified as one of the highest traveled roads in the county.

Not a Sinkhole

Brad Phillips, Deputy Road Commissioner, was quick to correct earlier news reports and assumptions that this was a sinkhole. "This was not a sinkhole, but instead it was a failure of an east to west pipeline under Road 36 that was installed when the culvert was originally built," he said. Phillips estimated that the old riveted, rusty pipeline was approximately 80 years old. "When it was hit with the force of that much water at once the old rusted out pipeline simply failed, causing the road to fall into the water when the culvert was washed out."

County crews were also forced to close two other sections of Road 36 that were unrelated to the failed pipeline. Road 36 at John Albert Drive was closed because floodwaters made it impossible for some

residents to leave their homes. Road 36, from John Albert to Avenue 14, was closed because power poles were leaning in the roadway.

State of Emergency

Sheriff John Anderson declared a state of emergency for Madera County last week and the Board of Supervisors ratified it last Tuesday. This will make Madera County eligible for funding through California Emergency Management Agency (CalEMA) funds to reimburse the county for repairs related to the current flooding problems. It's estimated that all costs related to the closure and repair on the pipeline under Road 36 will run approximately \$70,000.

Although initially county crews estimated it might take several months to reopen Road 36, Phillips reported that Road 36 has been completely repaired and was officially reopened on Monday, Jan. 10. All roads that had been closed for storm related repairs are now open.

Forget Earthquakes, “Megastorm” Possibly California’s Next “Big One”

Released by the United States Geologic Survey

For emergency planning purposes, scientists unveiled a hypothetical California scenario that describes a storm that could produce up to 10 feet of rain, cause extensive flooding (in many cases overwhelming the state's flood-protection system) and result in more than \$300 billion in damage.

The “ARkStorm Scenario,” prepared by the U.S. Geological Survey and released at the ARkStorm Summit in Sacramento on Jan. 13 – 14, combines prehistoric geologic flood history in California with modern flood mapping and climate-change projections to produce a hypothetical, but plausible, scenario aimed at preparing the emergency response community for this type of hazard.

The USGS, the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the California Emergency Management Agency convened the two-day summit to engage stakeholders from across California to take action as a result of the scenario's findings, which were developed over the last two years by more than 100 scientists and experts.

“The ARkStorm scenario is a complete picture of what that storm would do to the social

and economic systems of California,” said Lucy Jones, chief scientist of the USGS Multi-Hazards Demonstration Project and architect of ARkStorm. “We think this event happens once every 100 or 200 years or so, which puts it in the same category as our big San Andreas earthquakes. The ARkStorm is essentially two historic storms (January 1969 and February 1986) put back to back in a scientifically plausible way. The model is not an extremely extreme event.”

Jones noted that the largest damages would come from flooding — the models estimate that almost one-fourth of the houses in California would experience some flood damage from this storm.

“The time to begin taking action is now, before a devastating natural hazard event occurs,” said USGS Director, Marcia McNutt. “This scenario demonstrates firsthand how science can be the foundation to help build safer communities. The ARkStorm scenario is a scientifically vetted tool that emergency responders, elected officials and the general public can use to plan for a major catastrophic event to help prevent a hazard from becoming a dis-

Please see **STORM** on P. 18

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Hope for the New Year, Goodbye 2010 from the Ranchos Library

By Ellen Mester

As we look forward to the hope of a better new year, it is also good to reflect on the year that just passed, 2010. The proverbial tightening of the belt for Madera County and therefore the libraries began with two furlough days per month usually falling on a Friday. Then at the end of February, eight staff members were encouraged to retire as a cost-saving measure. This left the five libraries understaffed which in turn forced the reduction of hours to nearly half of what they once were. Did that help with the County budget? Absolutely. And are the libraries still open and serving the people of Madera County? Absolutely. Are people unhappy about the reduced hours? Absolutely. But until the budget improves we are making the best of the current situation. Our main objective is to keep the library open even if for a limited number of hours and staff. It is an important aspect of a democratic society to have information available and free for everyone. The library is a public place, apolitical, not behold- ing to corporate profits, but solely under the jurisdiction of the California State Library, the San Joaquin Valley Library System, to which we belong, and to the County Board of Super- visors. So please be patient and thoughtful with your words. It is not our intent for you to incur late fees or feel frustrated because we never are open when you want us to be. Barbara and I as staff, and all our wonderful volunteers who help keep the library running, will do our best to serve you at the Ranchos Library. That is my resolution to the community for the New Year. And let's hope and pray that the situation improves.

What's Happening at the Library

Our children's programs will continue in the New Year as planned:

Preschool Story Time: every Thursday at 11 a.m. with Diane Maxfield

After School Programs: every Wednesday at 2 p.m.

Summer Reading Program: mid-June through the end of July

Other Important Meeting Times

Friends of the Ranchos Library: the first Thursday of every month at 6 p.m.

Ranchos Library Knitting group: every Monday at 5 p.m.

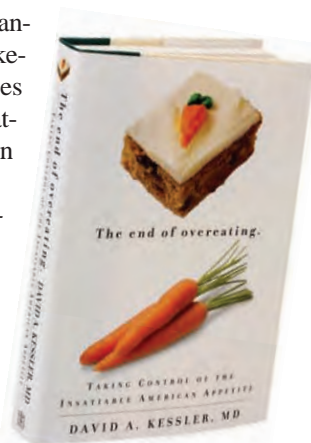
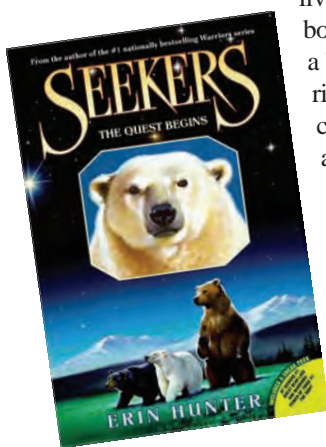
Citizens Advisory Committee: the last Wednesday of every month at 6 p.m.

Book Recommendations

Juvenile fiction: *The Quest Begins (Seekers, Book 1)* by Erin Hunter. This thoughtful and touching story brings together three young bears on similar quests to find a safe place to live that provides enough sustainable food. What makes this book so compelling is that each bear is a different species. Lusa, a black bear who has been raised in a zoo, has only heard stories about life in the wild. When the opportunity for her to escape presents itself, she heads into the forest not only seeking adventure but to fulfill a promise to a mother grizzly bear that she would find her son. Kallik, a polar bear, struggles to survive after witnessing her mother attacked by killer whales as they swam from ice patches trying to get to dry land. Her brother was left floating on a chunk of ice. His fate is unknown to her. Toklo, a grizzly cub, tries to be independent after his sickly brother dies, and his grief-stricken mother abandons him. Although the like- lihood of different species

coming together is slim, the tale has plenty of nat- ural bear behavior and touches on the impact of humans on their habitat.

Adult non-fiction: *The End of Overeating: Taking control of the Insatiable American Appetite* by David A. Kessler, M.D. Just in time for those New Year's resolutions to lose weight, or to change your diet to a healthier one, this book explains the why and how we overindulge. Dr. Kessler does a great job showing how physically and mentally we have become unable to stop overeating. Even those who are relatively thin or normal weight



struggle from the same food temptations as the overweight group. The key ingredients are sugar, fat and salt. And the commercial food industry is counting on our weaknesses by loading up on those three ingredients. I'm not talking conspiracy theory here, just busi- ness advantage. After Dr. Kessler walks the reader through the why and how of it all, he then offers sound ways to break the food bondage in what he calls "Food Rehab." It's a very interesting take on a serious problem that Americans are facing. When we overeat, every other aspect of our life is affected. We are not only hurting ourselves but our soci- ety as well. At any rate, this book is certainly food for thought.

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

It's Official! Coffee Drinking is Good for Your Health!

Drinking coffee in moderate amounts during middle age may reduce the risk of dementia and Alzheimer's disease in the elderly according to a study done in Finland and Sweden. Those who drank three to five cups of coffee per day in midlife were much less likely to have developed dementia or Alzheimer's disease in follow-up checks two decades or more later, the researchers said in an issue of the Journal of Alzheimer's Disease.

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Editorial

Screwed Again

By Randy Bailey

Are you a fan of the comic strip *Peanuts*? Even though its creator, Charles Schulz, has been gone for several years and, yes, toward the end it wasn't nearly as good as it was in its heyday, I think we all had a special place in our hearts for the exploits of Lucy, Linus and, of course, Charlie Brown.

One recurring theme that Schulz used over the years was the interplay between Charlie Brown and Lucy when it came to her holding the football for him to kick. She would always hold it, promise Charlie Brown that she had no intentions of moving it, Charlie Brown would throw caution to the wind and would determine that THIS time Lucy would hold it and he would kick a 50-yard field goal. He would then back up about 20 yards to really build up a huge head of steam, run at the ball as fast as he could and at the last possible moment kick with all of his might.

And then, every time, Lucy would jerk the ball out of the way, sending Charlie Brown into a humiliating sprawling heap on his back in the middle of the yard.

One definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different outcome each time. Charlie Brown's faith in Lucy was indeed insane, yet he gave her the benefit of the doubt each time and ran at that football full speed -- only to end up humiliated on his back gasping for air wondering what happened.

Back a couple of years ago local

landowners received word that PG&E was considering running a 500kV line through the Ranchos parallel to the existing 230kV lines. There were community meetings, there were objections, there were presentations for alternate routes, there were promises from PG&E that all of this was in the very early planning stages and all alternatives would be considered, with public input, before any final decisions were made. All very transparent, very above board, very fair and reasonable. PG&E put on its little Lucy wig and dress and held that football ever so tightly and throughout the entire process assured us, the sappy Charlie Brown Ranchos, that we would have every opportunity to knock that football down the field and over the goalposts, in the process preventing our little community from looking like Irwindale or Long Beach or any other heavily industrialized areas of California where the horizon is a maze of power lines, replete with the incessant buzzing and dangerous high-voltage lines.

And then she yanked the ball away.

A few weeks ago I had a concerned citizen come into my office and asked me if I knew what was going on with the little substation on Avenue 12 right before you get to Highway 41. I said no, but I had noticed the construction going on and how heavy duty the new equipment looked. He said, "They must be getting ready for the 500kV lines."

I assured him that I had heard nothing about that and, anyway, Lucy was still holding that ball ever so tightly for us to kick.

Last week I had a veteran PG&E employee come into my office for some chit chat. We were talking about other things but in the course of the conversation the 500kV lines came up.

"Where's PG&E on the different routes for the 500kV lines?" I asked.

He looked confused.

"That's a done deal. They're coming through the Ranchos. PG&E has owned the land since after WWII. It was *always* going to be through here," he said.

And with that I felt my leg go up in the air and my back slam into the cold, hard Madera Ranchos ground. I laid there and looked up at the gray, overcast January sky gasping for air and wondered how this could happen. Lucy was holding the ball and had given us all the assurances we wanted to hear. What happened?

Oh yeah ... we trusted her.

The Ranchos Independent

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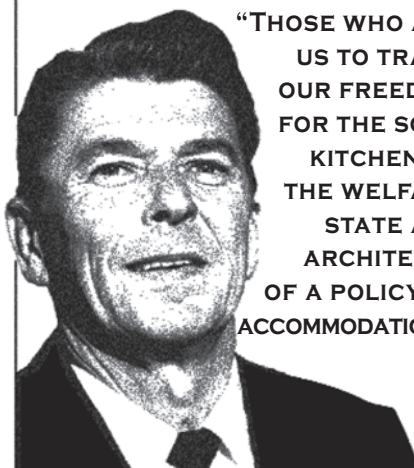
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Welfare Fraud, Just for Laughs

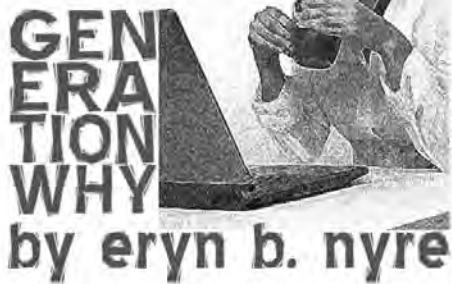
The other day, I spent the better part of my lunch hour eavesdropping on a conversation at an adjacent table in the break room of my office building. One of the women at the table was giving a step by step recount of her most recent visit to the welfare office while she was attempting to acquire government assistance. Normally, I keep my earphones on and my nose in my school books, but occasionally a conversation catches my attention and I break the cardinal rule of etiquette: keep your big fat nose out of other people's business.

The part of the conversation that caught my attention was when she laughed with her co-workers about telling a social worker that she didn't know who the father of her child was. I was shocked that she viewed that as a laughing matter. I would have personally been mortified to admit that my bed had seen so many visitors that I couldn't narrow down the other half of my child's DNA, then to laugh about it as if it was akin to not knowing the manufacturer of her cell phone just blew my mind. And, as if I wasn't appalled enough, she then proceeds to tell her audience that she really did know the

identity of the father, but had made a deal with him not to report him to the state. Evidently he had already fathered two other children, and he just couldn't afford any more child support for the third. Good thing the tax payers have so much extra cash lying around then. This woman opted to defraud the government instead of telling him that if his finances were too tight to support additional children, then he should stop having them. I suppose it is too late now, maybe the mother of his fourth child will stand up to him.

Where's the Shame?

This is a throwback to an earlier point. I would wager that had this girl's audience looked at her with revulsion and disgust, rather than laughed as if she was telling them a funny little anecdote, or maybe if the social worker had made her feel humiliated, she would have been less likely to commit welfare fraud. Could be, given the choice between doing the right thing and losing your friends and become



GENERATION WHY
by **eryn b. nyre**

a social leper, more people would be inclined to make good choices. Certainly the mere idea of defrauding the government isn't deterrent enough; heck, that's just a Tuesday special.

I was relaying this story to my father and he, in turn, told me he happens to have come across a co-worker with a daughter actively engaging in welfare fraud. Evidently, at about 17 years old she decided she wanted to have a child, thank you MTV, so she found a boyfriend, got pregnant and immediately went to the local welfare office and jumped on government assistance, food stamps and Section 8 housing. None of which falls into the fraud category; what does, though, is that she moved her boyfriend into

the government housing she acquired and since they are not married, she doesn't feel obligated to report his income. Does anyone else see this as stealing? Evidently my roommate has a friend who is living this very same lie. In both cases, neither female is working because with the dual income, the boyfriend's and the tax payer's contribution, they don't need to.

Paying for Lies

Now, not only are people deliberately having children they knowingly can't afford, but I, and the millions of other tax payers, are supposed to feed and clothe their children while they sit at home and lie to the government. Welfare and social programs were designed to help get people back on their feet, not to provide a single mother with enough financial comfort to have more children on someone else's dime. Government assistance is there to help for the short-term; it

Please see **GEN WHY** on P. 13

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The Stock Report

Bye 2010, Hello Ranchos Future

By Audrey Stock

Hi neighbors,

As we say goodbye to 2010 and hello to 2011, how are you feeling? Do you know that if you change your attitude you can also change your world a little bit at a time and make 2011 your best year yet? This is something I learned a long time ago. If you have a positive attitude to start your day, you will have a much better day.

2010 was the year of mean politics; the conservatives and liberals seem to still be at each other's throats. I wish I knew what it would take to make politicians be civil to each other. When was having a different option a bad thing? I grew up when the slogan "a chicken in every pot" was the dream of most people. Now a "cell phone in every hand"

seems to be the dream. I have lived through many different Presidents. Modern technology has changed how the world does business. A computer in almost every home has opened up a world of information for children. It is not just a piece of office machinery, as it started out to be. I come from a time of one phone hooked on the wall

and that was only in a few homes because not every family could afford a monthly phone bill. If you had a phone the neighbors would come to your house to make an important call or some time to receive an important message. Now 5-year-old children have their own cell phones to call their parents. How times have changed.

When Golden Valley Unified became a school district and received Webster Elementary from Madera Unified the only computers were still in boxes and had never been hooked up. Most of the teachers would not have been able to work them any way. Since that time just 10 years ago, Golden Valley Unified has grown to two elementary schools, a middle school, a high school and an Educational Options school with working computers in all of them. The teachers have all learned how

to use their computers and to use them for record keeping in their classroom. Keeping up with technology will always be one of Golden Valley Unified's biggest challenges.

Do you know that today's Americans have a cheap GPS navigation system for their car that is superior to what jet pilots used in their new airplanes 30 years ago? Flying used to be an aristocratic privilege beyond the reach of most of the middle class. Today most middle class Americans can fly to Europe and take luxury cruises which very few Americans could do in the 1900's. Last year the senior class of students at Liberty High had their Senior Prom on a cruise ship in the San Francisco Bay. Such a thing was unheard of just a few short years ago. High School students never went off campus for a prom. A

prom was always held in the gym. High School students of today have different expectations than even those students of 10 years ago. More students are being motivated to go to college than ever before even though the cost of a college education continues to go up. Inventors are still coming up with new inventions that the kids all seem to know

This year at Liberty High School I was pleased to see our bond money at work. The new football field, track field and stadium were completed along with the snack bar, ticket window and real restrooms ... our bond money has been well spent so far on what the community wanted when we voted for the first bond to build Liberty High.

how to work and adults struggle to learn.

This year at Liberty High School I was pleased to see our bond money at work. The new football field, track field and stadium were completed along with the snack bar, ticket window and real restrooms. The bleachers were the last thing to be added for that project. Next was the new Science building with all of the newest science equipment for Liberty's Science Department. As I have said before, "As soon as we build a state-of-the-art swimming pool Liberty High will be complete." Our bond money has been well spent so far on what the community wanted when we voted for the first bond to build Liberty High.

When Webster Elementary and

Please see **STOCK** on P. 20



Aunt Jean's Ranchos Recipes

by Jean Kriner

Super Bowl? Super Food!

Thanks to Randy, Christopher, Carolyn, Keegan and Rachael, I am up and running again. First it was the computer tower and then the monitor and then the printer that didn't work. I didn't realize how three different pieces of equipment that work so independently, can be so dependent on each other. Somewhat like we humans, huh?

Well, here we are into another new year. Hope you had a good first of January to start the year off right. I was looking on the calendar to see what holidays were coming up and discovered (although it is not an official holiday, it is celebrated like one) Super Bowl XLV (45) will

be on Feb. 6. Who will be in it this year? Nobody knows for sure until the play-offs are finished. Then there are those people who could care less which teams are in it, it's just a good excuse for a party. I used to work for a young man that did not like football at all – in fact, on Super Bowl Sunday he would go outside and wash their cars while his wife and kids were in the house watching the game. I'm that way about baseball – I get more excited watching paint dry than watching a baseball game. Oh boy, will I get comments about that statement!

There are a lot of "statistics" tied to the Super Bowl that can be true or not. One being sewers have had a problem keeping up with so many toilets being flushed during half time, but according to Snopes.com that is not true. Then there is the fact that there are more Pizzas sold

on Super Bowl Sunday than any other day in the year.

A Commercial Fan

I always like the commercials during the game. I read that Pepsi was coming back this year after not being in last year. And the Anheuser Busch Clydesdale horses – I don't drink beer, but I love to watch those horses. I watched a video on the internet of Hank not being included in last year's hitch. The Dalmatian mascot took Hank out and trained him all year so that Hank would be included in this year. It is a cute video. And this year's half time entertainment will be Black Eyed Peas. Not being familiar with this group, I researched them on the internet. They are listed as Hip Hop/Contemporary R/B. This should be some show!

Super Bowl Sunday is a good excuse to "legally" bring out the munchies. But don't just open a bag of chips and say, "this is it." Depending on how many will be in your cheering group, you could have a "pot luck" and

Super Bowl Sunday is a good excuse to "legally" bring out the munchies. But don't just open a bag of chips and say, "this is it."

have each one bring something different to eat. A simple suggestion (if you're at a loss at what to bring) is open a package of cream cheese that is at room temperature and pour a jar of salsa over it and serve with tortilla chips. Or, if you like seafood instead of salsa, pour a jar of either shrimp or crab cocktail on the cream cheese and serve with pita chips. Or how about a tray of sliced cucumbers, zucchini, carrots, broccoli, cauliflower and olives with a bowl of ranch dressing?

One of my favorite dips is the old standby sour cream and onion soup mix. Just stir in a package of Lipton Onion Soup mix into a pint of sour cream but be sure to let it sit a couple of hours before serving so you won't be biting down on dry onions. The other dip I like is

Please see **RECIPE** on P. 9

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RECIPE cont. from P. 8

the Seven Layer Dip – that is the name of it, but there aren't always seven items layered. When our family gets together and I take this dip, I usually make it on a large jelly roll pan.

Seven Layer Dip

- Refried Beans
- Sour Cream
- Guacamole
- Diced Chiles (drained)
- Shredded Lettuce
- Diced Tomatoes
- Green Onions – chopped
- Sliced Olives
- Grated Cheese

I didn't put any amounts because it all depends on the size of the platter you will be using. For the pan I use, I use two large cans of beans, a pint of sour cream and a container of prepared guacamole (better if you make it fresh). Also, if you want to serve this a little fancier, crumble and brown a pound of hamburger, drain well and put on top of the beans before the sour cream. I've also put a jar of salsa on before putting on the lettuce. Serve with tortilla chips.

I found a recipe from a girl that worked in our office for Brandied Chicken Wings

Brandied Chicken Wings

3 Pounds Chicken Wings (with tips removed)

Sauce

- ¼ C Brown Sugar (packed)
- ¼ C Cooking sherry
- ¾ C Soy Sauce
- 2 t Ground Ginger
- 1 or 2 Cloves of Garlic, chopped

Combine sauce ingredients. Place chicken wings in baking dish. Pour marinade over chicken wings, let soak overnight. Bake on greased cookie sheet at 450 for 10 minutes on each side. Reduce

heat to 350 and bake about 15 minutes longer until wings are done.

Or how about a dip that you don't have to wash the bowl when it's gone?

Knorr Spinach Dip

1 Pkg. (10 oz) Frozen Chopped Spinach –thawed and squeezed dry

1 Container (16 oz) Sour Cream

1 C Mayonnaise

1 Pkg. Knorr Vegetable Recipe Mix (I read another recipe and it called for a package of Knorr Leek Soup Mix)

1 Can (8 oz) Water Chestnuts, drained and chopped

1 Green Onion, chopped (optional)

Combine all ingredients and chill for at least 2 hours.

Hollow out a round loaf of French bread, or if your table will have room for it and you can't find the round loaf, how about a regular loaf of French bread and serve the dip in the hollowed loaf? Take the hollowed bread and break it into bite-size pieces and use as dippers. When dip gets almost gone, tear the "bowl" apart to eat and you have already dipped bread.

According to the internet, the game starts at 3:25 p.m. our time, so you will have time to get up, go to church and be home in plenty of time to enjoy – especially if your team is winning – the game.

One last thing before I close: I want to remind you of the Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce's Annual Crab Feed that is coming up. It will be on Saturday, March 5. The tickets this year are \$40 and this is the major fundraiser for the Chamber to finance their expenses for most of the year. They do good work, so let's all support them!

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Seniors Ask: What are *You* Doing for the NEXT Generation of Youth?

By Verlaine Elinburg

A self-important college freshmen walking along the beach took it upon himself to explain to a senior citizen resting on some steps why it was impossible for the older generation to understand his generation.

"You grew up in a different world, actually an almost primitive one," the student said, loud enough for the other to hear. "The young people today grew up with television, jet planes, space travel and walking on the moon. We have nuclear energy, cell phones, computers operating at light speed and much more."

After a brief silence the senior responded, "You are right son. We did not have those things when we were young, so we invented them. Now, you arrogant little #@*!, what are you going to do for the next generation?"

As we end another year the seniors should be proud of what they have created for the next generation. Could yesteryear's Great Society have promised to nearly all Americas they would soon have instant information on almost any topic imaginable? Americans have cheap GPS navigation systems comparable to what jet pilots used 30 years ago. Secret agent James Bond's gadgets seem passé in comparison to the accessories available on today's iPhones. A thumb-sized digital music pod holds songs and plays them with far better quality. Movies at home are downloaded to your television. Books are now downloaded to different gadgets for reading pleasure, all made available to us without a government program. Thanks to new life-saving drugs, death sentences of dozens of cancers are now possible. The rapid advances in correcting chronic bone, joint, hearing, vision and dental problems, now provide treatment and correction.

We enjoy the plush, luxury ride of a Cadillac now available in a mid-level Malibu, Taurus, Accord or Camry. They are safer, quieter, more comfortable and have a host of standard features that were yesterday's high luxury options. Flying used to be an aristocratic privilege beyond the reach of most in the middle class, but today it is an American means of transportation for long distance travel. Cruises were synonymous

with private yachts but now we enjoy luxury ocean liners. As gas exceeds \$3 per gallon in many parts of the country, we rail about the rising cost, forgetting that in inflation-adjusted dollars, gas prices are not much more than what we paid three decades ago. Our far more clean-burning cars get almost twice as many miles per gallon as their predecessors in 1975, cutting our real cost in half.

We enjoy our modern three bedroom suburban houses that are warmer in winter, cooler in summer and have far more appliances and comforts than was true of vast mansions as recently as the mid-20th century.

In sum, Americans are richer, healthier and have more options than at any time in history. There is still poverty and tensions over relative status and influence, and in addition the good life cannot be measured by materialism alone, but peace of mind, security and opportunities. Through technological breakthrough, improved productivity has achieved an unmatched prosperity in the history of civilization. We need to continue as "We the People." The Ranchos/Hills Seniors are the Great Society of yesteryears.

The Ranchos/Hills Seniors had a great holiday season, particularly with the celebration of Thanksgiving with a potluck dinner that was enjoyed with traditional and different ethnic dishes. The Senior Center then moved on to the Christmas events, including the Christmas Boutique and Bake Sale, the catered Christmas Dinner and the installation of the new officers and board members. We now have new President Mike Thomson, who will also serve as Santa Clause and the Easter Bunny, and you will also see him as a sign dancer at the corner of Ave. 12 and Fernwood, drawing attention to the Senior Center monthly boutique and bake sales. We also have a male board member, Willis Case. The Center hopes that more male Baby Boomers will join in. The membership of the Ranchos/Hills Senior Center extends our thanks to our outgoing President, Ethel Pronin, for her leadership and hard work.

The Christmas Boutique and Home Tour and Tea were huge successes and a special "thank you" goes to the families who

Please see SENIOR on P. 13

As we end another year the seniors should be proud of what they have created for the next generation.

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Chamber of Commerce



Piles to Files - Part I

Creating an Action File System

A Sally Forth comic strip describes the all-too-common paper pile as, "... the pile of stuff that we don't know what to do with or don't feel like dealing with right now. The pile that sits patiently on the counter for weeks awaiting our attention. The pile that gets put away when company comes and then forgotten until it's too late. The pile that ultimately gets thrown out with equal measures of relief and guilt."

Have you ever had one of those piles? I have. Before I started using what I call the "Piles to Files" system, there was a kitchen counter corner reserved for those papers. What I find in many homes is a little bit of paper here, a little bit there, or a lot everywhere! So what do you do with the bills to pay, tickets for a show next month, or that form you need to complete and take to your next doctor's visit? Don't create a pile, create a home!

Create a Pile Home

There's usually one room where the mail and other papers tend to land. Ideally this might be the home office, but it's not necessarily the case. Since we tend to be creatures of habit and "the fewer steps I have to take the more likely it will get done," use the area of the house that is already the catch-all to create your paper home. Use an open-topped rectangular decorative container, like a basket or wooden file holder, and purchase some decorative file folders available online or at most stores that carry office supplies.

Gather up all your papers and begin the sorting process. Chances are many will fall into the "Recycle" or "Shred" category if they've been there awhile. For the papers that need some type of action taken, i.e. something you want to read, a form to fill out, a bill to pay, etc., put it in one of the folders and put a temporary label on it with a sticky note. Also create a folder for the papers that don't need any action other than to file in long-term filing. (We'll talk about storing those in Part II.)

Once all your action papers have been sorted, check your categories to see if some need to be combined or sorted further. Permanently label the finished folders using a label maker. Here are some commonly used Piles to Files folders: **Action** (some also include an Urgent folder), **Bills to Pay**, **Catalog Orders**, **Coupons**, **Events** (for tickets, invitations, etc.), **File, Read**, and **Receipts**. I add other temporary folders for specific seasons like election time when collecting info on candidates and issues, or at Christmas when saving memorabilia from programs and other events.

Not a Permanent Home

Remember, this is not a permanent home for papers. Make appointments for yourself on your calendar to complete the action items related to the papers you're storing, especially if they have deadlines, and then move them out of that file when completed. Periodically purge the entire system.

Now, you'll not only have a home for each piece of mail or other paper that arrives, you'll also know exactly where to find it when you need to retrieve it!

You can contact Brenda McElroy to have questions answered at *Organized by Choice* (because things don't always fall into place) at P.O. Box 26152, Fresno, CA 93729, email her at info@organized-bychoice.com, visit her website www.organizedbychoice.com or she can be reached by phone at 559-871-3314.



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GEN WHY cont. from P. 6

is a resource to get people through the tough times, not a means of permanent financial support. The point is to accept assistance while you get stabilized, find a job, get back on track, out of the hole and return to being a productive member of society. For many Americans that is exactly how they use the program. On the other hand, there are many people taking advantage of this system because it is easier to sit at home on the couch then don a McDonald's uniform and ask, "Would you like fries with that?" for eight hours a day. Sadly it would appear that this attitude has become commonplace, the product of a live-free, love-free, "let someone else pick up the check" society. Why worry about taking care of your own business when there are people out there that will do it for us?

Right now my parents' generation is still going strong and can provide the tax dollars needed to fill the welfare pork barrel. But, at some point, I fear the majority of the nation is going to expect to be supported by the government. When our parents are gone and there is no money left in the big welfare checking account and people are scrounging for a burger, I have only one question: Do you suppose they will want fries with that?

SENIOR cont. from P. 10

shared their homes. A "thank you" also goes out to Bobbie Farina for all the baked goods and the decorations of the Christmas trees and to Carol Reeves for the organization of the event and the decoration of the Ranchos/Hills Senior Center. Also, to the young people of Liberty High School and the Seniors that made all this possible. The Ranchos/Hills membership expresses their appreciation and thanks for making the Boutique, Home Tour and Tea outstanding events for the holidays.

The Department of Health comes periodically to the Center for free checkups. The screenings include personal health history review, blood pressure and blood sugar tests, nutrition and health education, and low-cost blood tests. The health screenings are for ages 50 and above. For referrals to medical providers and community services the contact number is 675-7893 to make an appointment.

A nutritionally balanced lunch program is available Monday through Friday at 11:30 a.m. A suggested price for 60 years and older is \$1.75. Reservations are needed a day in advance so remember to call Joann at 645-4864. We have a growing exercise program being held on Mondays, Wednes-

days and Fridays at 10 a.m. The participants are getting more than just exercise by attending. They have fun, share laughs and meet new friends. There is room for you and you may attend all three days or just one or two of them. Check your calendar for daily events for each day of the week. If you do not have a copy, stop by the Senior Center for a copy. Additional copies are available at the Ranchos Market and Hurst Hardware store.

January Weekly Schedule

Monday: Exercise, lunch; Second Monday of month general meeting at 7 p.m.

Planning – Fourth Monday at 12:30 p.m.

Tuesday: Lunch, Pinochle at noon; Board meeting, first Tuesday of month, at 6 p.m.

Wednesday: Exercise, lunch and recycling. Card bingo at noon.

Thursday: Garden clean-up, lunch, crafts at 12:30 p.m. Social and card games at 5:30 p.m.

Friday: Exercise, lunch.

February Weekly Schedule

Monday: Exercise, lunch; Second Monday of month general meeting at 7 p.m.

Planning – Fourth Monday at 12:30 p.m.

Tuesday: Lunch, Pinochle at noon; Board meeting, first Tuesday of month, at 6 p.m.

Wednesday: Exercise, lunch and recycling. Card bingo at noon.

Thursday: Garden clean-up, lunch, crafts at 12:30 p.m. Social, potluck and card games at 5:30 p.m.

Friday: Exercise, lunch.

Saturday: Feb. 19 Birthdays and Anniversaries – Viktoria's Place at 488 W Herndon (at Ingram), Fresno at 11:30 a.m. Call 559-261-1505.

The Senior Center is open from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. The Farmers' Market is low on produce for the winter. Some fruit is available. Home jam and jelly and walnuts are available at all times. Stop by and visit with the seniors. The Center has all kinds of information available for all generations. The Senior Center is our playground where we can go and play with our friends and make new friends, bring together new ideas and events. As part of the Great Society of yesteryears we keep creating for our next generation to have fun and be productive.

Looking for a Valentine's Day Dinner that helps a GREAT cause?

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Monday, February 14
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Are we nearing the period of The Great Day of the Lord, also known as Jacob's Trouble or The Great Tribulation? As people more and more see our economy failing and become more worried about their future and the future of their children, we seem to be on the edge of an economic collapse of our nation. The devalued dollar results in people having to spend more to obtain less. We hear talk about a Global Economy and a Global Currency and about bringing the nations of the world together because their economies are collapsing as well.

The Bible has much to say about all of these events that are unfolding before our eyes.

In February, Calvary Chapel, which is now meeting at 37275 Ave. 12 behind S&K Market in the Madera Ranchos, will be showing the Mark IV Productions movie series based on the above events. Although originally produced in the 1970s, the message of this movie series still has a strong impact on viewers. Mark IV Productions shows life before the Rapture of the Church, the Rapture, the Great Tribulation and the Antichrist, and the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Pastor John Reyna will be teaching a message each Sunday coinciding with the movies.

SATURDAYS - Movie Titles

Feb. 5 - *A Distant Thunder*
Feb. 12 - *A Thief in the Night*
Feb. 19 - *Image of the Beast*
Feb. 26 - *The Prodigal Planet*

SUNDAYS - Teaching Series

Jan. 30 - **The Removal or Rapture of the Church**
Feb. 6 - **The Rise of the Antichrist**
Feb. 13 - **The False Prophet and the Coming Economic Mark of the Beast**
Feb. 20 - **The Coming of Christ**

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Golden Valley Unified School District Leadership Roles Filled by Current Staff



Golden Valley Unified School District Superintendent, Sarah Koligian.

By Sarah Koligian

I wish all of you a happy, healthy new year. When we come to the half-way point in the school year, it is a reminder of how

fast time goes by. The students completed half of their school year and their finals before the winter break. Our teachers and students are geared up for the new semester, which began on January 10. Before you know it, graduation and promotion will be here the first week in June.

As Golden Valley Unified begins the second semester of the school year, the district is pleased to report that they have filled the vacant leadership positions with current GVUSD employees. Joining us as the new principal of Webster Elementary School and Sierra View Elementary School is Mr. Felipe Piedra, former Liberty High School Learning Director. Mr. Piedra became part of Golden Valley in 2006 as a counselor at Liberty High School then became the Learning Director at Liberty in 2009.

Mr. Aaron Black, the former Vice Principal/Guidance Learning Specialist shared between Webster Elementary School and Ranchos Middle School, is now the new Learning Director at Liberty

High School. Mr. Black joined Golden Valley in 2005 as a teacher in the Science Department at Liberty High School.

Ms. Alexis Jennings, former 5th grade teacher at Webster Elementary, is assuming the Lead Teacher role assisting in shared administrative duties at Webster Elementary School and Ranchos Middle School until the end of the year. Ms. Jennings joined Golden Valley and Webster Elementary as a teacher in 2002.

Ms. Jill Derkalousdian, former GVUSD teacher, will be filling in for Ms. Jennings' 5th grade position at Webster Elementary School until the end of the year. Ms. Derkalosidan joined the Golden Valley team as a Paraprofessional at Valley Teen Ranch in 2005 and became part of the Sierra View teaching team in 2006.

We are fortunate and blessed to be able to promote quality employees from within the organization with our very own aspiring leaders. They are essential to continuing Golden Valley's vision of "Growing a District of Excellence."



Fidi Cuevas, left, and Aaron Black prepare for their new positions of leadership at GVUSD.



Also assuming leadership positions will be Felipe Piedra, left, and Alexis Jennings.



The Mock Trial participants included, back row from left, Andy Hart, Kaitlyn Mendez, Gabriel Mendoza, Jasmine Dhaliwal, Kelli Schuh, Lauren Bailey and Chloe Doyle. In the front row, from left, are Stacie Gizzo, Jessi Wallace, Shannon Foley and Yecenia Arellano.



Jessie Wallace and Carl Temple, front, are recognized as Wendy's H. S. Heisman nominees.



Martha Tessmer, left, presents a check to Courtney Moses with LHS Principal Mann.

Local Golden Valley Students Shine

LHS Mock Trial

For the first time, the Liberty High School Mock Trial team entered the Madera Mock Trial competition in 2010. The team competed against Sierra, Yosemite and Minarets high schools. They were praised as the best novice team by Judge Ernie Licalsi. The honorable mention awards winners were: Chloe Doyle, Kaitlyn Mendez, Andy Hart and Lauren Bailey. Congratulations to all students and coach Mac Blate.

Jessi Wallace and Carl Temple

Each fall, the Wendy's High School Heisman (WHS) recognizes the nation's most esteemed high school senior men and women for excellence in academics, athletics and community/school leadership. Students from across the country become involved in the WHS program because these prestigious student recognition awards highlight their accomplishments and the winning students are showcased on a national level. Jessi and Carl have not progressed to the State Finalist level but LHS is proud to have them recognized as the school nominees.

Courtney Moses

Courtney entered a driver safety essay contest which is part of the California Highway Patrol's "What do you consider lethal?" campaign. The campaign focuses on distracted driving by teens. Martha Tessmer presented Courtney a check on behalf of the CHP for \$500 for her winning essay.



Committee Members Needed
for the
Golden Valley Unified School District
Citizens' Bond Oversight Committee.

The Golden Valley Unified School District is now accepting applications for several openings on the Citizens' Bond Oversight Committee to oversee Measure S Bond monies.

If interested, please obtain an application from the Superintendent's Office
37479 Avenue 12, Madera 93636
(559) 645-7500.

Deadline for applying is Friday, February 18, 2011.

Star Shine Time

It's that time of year to nominate GVUSD employees for the annual STAR recognition awards. Employees can be nominated by parents, community members, students and colleagues. The Foundation for Golden Valley School holds an annual dinner in March to recognize the five employees who are chosen by a panel of community members in the following categories:

- Secondary Teacher • Elementary Teacher •
- Operational Service Employee •
- Instructional Service Employee •
- Administrator/Manager •

Following the Foundation STARS Dinner, three employees are forwarded to the Madera County Office of Education for its Excellence in Education Awards. Madera County Office of Education, in partnership with the Educational Employees Credit Union, holds an annual recognition event in October to honor outstanding employees throughout Madera County.

Please plan to nominate an outstanding employee by submitting a nomination form to Aimee Beintker at the Golden Valley Unified School District Office by February 11. Nomination forms can be found on the Golden Valley USD website at www.gvUSD.k12.ca.us, at a school site or at the district office. If you have any questions please feel free to contact Aimee Beintker at 645-7500.

Bacon, Eggs & Halderman

Madera County
Economic Commission
hosts "Eggs and Issues"

The Madera County Economic Development Commission will be hosting an "Eggs and Issues" breakfast on February 4 featuring Assemblywoman Linda Halderman at the Madera Community Hospital in the Shebelut/Pierini Room. Breakfast will be served at 7:30 a.m. and Assemblywoman Halderman will speak shortly after that time. This event will provide a format for local business and community leaders to get an update on state issues and will present an opportunity to ask the Assemblywoman questions.

"Things are happening fast in our State Capitol these days and this will give community members a chance to hear a first hand update of critical issues," said Bobby Kahn, Executive Director of the Madera County EDC.

Tickets for this event are \$15 per person and are available by calling the Madera County EDC at 559-675-7768. Reservations are a must as seating will be limited to 65 participants.

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Math Crazy owner and tutor Tom Filer, right, helps a student understand high school geometry.

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Madera Master Gardener Event Focuses on Landscape Tree Care

On Saturday, Feb. 19 from 10 a.m. to noon, the Madera County Master Gardener program is presenting Tree Care for Your Landscape, hosted by Master Gardener Sandy Hallam and Certified Arborist Dave Hallam.

The event will be held at Three Sisters Demonstration Garden at Madera Community College Center, 30277 Avenue 12, Madera. It is recommended that you park in Lot C adjacent to the garden. If you have any questions or would like to make reservations, call 559 675-7879, ext 210, or email the Madera County Master Gardeners at mg-madera@ucdavis.edu. Their website is groups.ucanr.org/maderamg.

The University of California (UC) Master Gardener Program extends to the public UC research-based information about home horticulture and pest management. In exchange for the training and materials received from the University of California, Master Gardeners perform volunteer services by sharing the UC research-based information to the public through classes, workshops, one-on-one consultations, demonstration gardens,

websites, fairs and plant clinics, and through mass media. The program is an example of an effective partnership between the University and motivated citizens. Because certified Master Gardeners represent UC Cooperative Extension (UCCE), they broaden UCCE's client base and sphere of influence. The Master Gardener Program is administered locally by participating UCCE county offices, the principal outreach and public service arm of the University's Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

Want to become a Master Gardener? Interested adult volunteers go through a training and certification process which includes a 17-week training course and devoting 50 volunteer hours back to the program outreach the first year. Training topics include plant botany, disease and insects, weed science, plant propagation, irrigation, soil science, home vegetable gardening, fruit trees and grapes, landscape trees, turf and diagnosing plant problems. Continuing Master Gardeners complete 25 volunteer hours and 12 continuing education hours annually to maintain their certification in the program.

STORM cont. from P. 2

aster.”

To define impacts of the ARkStorm, the USGS, in partnership with the California Geological Survey, created the first statewide landslide susceptibility maps for California that are the most detailed landslide susceptibility maps ever created. The project also resulted in the first physics-based coastal storm modeling system for analyzing severe storm impacts (predicting wave height and coastal erosion) under present-day scenarios and under various climate-change and sea-level-rise scenarios.

Because the scenario raised serious questions about existing national, state and local disaster policy and emergency management systems, ARkStorm became the theme of the 2010 Extreme Precipitation Symposium at U.C. Davis John Muir Institute of the Environment, attracting over 200 leaders in meteorology and flood management. ARkStorm is part of the efforts to create a National Real-Time Flood Mapping initiative to improve flood management nationwide. ARkStorm also provided a platform for emergency managers, meteorologists and hydrologists to work together to develop a scaling system for west coast storms.

“Cal EMA is proud to partner with the USGS in this important work to protect California from disasters,” said Cal EMA Acting Secretary Mike Dayton. “In order to have the

most efficient and effective plans and response capabilities, we have to have the proper science to base it on. Californians are better protected because of the scientific efforts of the United States Geological Survey.”

According to FEMA Region IX Director, Nancy Ward, “The ARkStorm report will prove to be another invaluable tool in engaging the whole of our community in addressing flood emergencies in California. It is entirely possible that flood control infrastructure and mitigation efforts could be overwhelmed by the USGS ARkStorm scenario, and the report suggests ways forward to limit the damage that is sure to result.”

The two-day summit included professional flood managers, emergency managers, first responders, business continuity managers, forecasters, hydrologists and decision makers. Many of the scientists responsible for coordinating the ARkStorm scenario presented the science behind the scenario, including meteorology, forecasting, flood modeling, landslides and physical and economic impacts.

The ARkStorm Scenario is the second scenario from the USGS Multi-Hazards Demonstration Project led by Jones, which earlier created the ShakeOut earthquake scenario. More information about the ARkStorm Summit is online at USGS.gov. The ARkStorm Scenario, USGS Open-File Report 2010-1312, is also online.

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2. SILENT AUCTION at Alfresco Coffee
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4. BLOODMOBILE taking donations

Money raised during the time of this fundraiser will be donated to the Delgado family to help offset the cost incurred during their three months stay in Stanford.

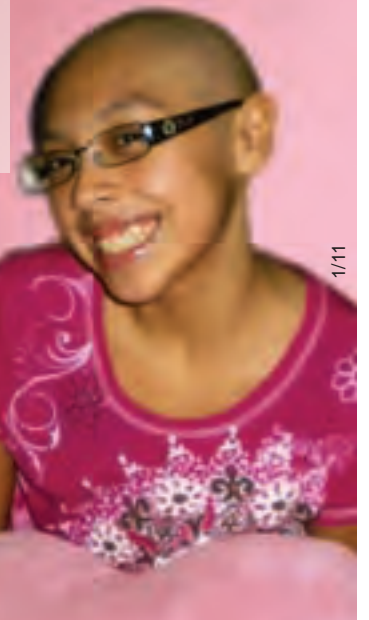
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The Pastor's Desk

A Goof-Forgiving God ... Thankfully

By David Jones

As a new writer I can only hope I don't make some of the goofs my fellow leaders and churchmen have made in the past. I am reminded of the speech John F. Kennedy made in Berlin where he attempted to say, "I am a Berliner!" His German actually came out, "I am a jelly donut!"

Do you remember Dan Quayle's blunder? "I believe we are on an irreversible trend toward more freedom and democracy. But that could change."

Leaders are bound to make mistakes just due to the repetition of speeches and memorized politically correct answers, but leaders aren't the only ones who mess up. Consider the humble church newsletters that have often been hastily edited. The following are just a few newsletter goofs:

Low Self-Esteem Support Group will meet Thursday at 7 p.m. Please use the back door.

The eighth graders will be presenting Shakespeare's "Hamlet" in the church basement on Friday at 6 p.m. The congregation is invited to attend this tragedy.

Twenty members were present at the meeting held at the home of Mrs. Marsha Crutchfield last evening. Mrs. Crutchfield and Mrs. Rankin sang a duet, The Lord Knows Why.

A songfest was held at the Methodist church Wednesday.

I have always been afraid that on some occasion such as a wedding or a funeral, I would make a major blunder. So far I have managed to keep it together but I know my blunder is out there waiting to happen.

I first felt God's call on my life to be a preacher when I was only 17 years old. Since then I have been in many situations that are viewed as humorous now that they are in the past. I recall one wedding where the bridesmaid fainted (in front of 400 people) and as she fell, she tipped over a flowerpot, which somehow wound up on top of

her pale face. I sent up a quick prayer hoping I didn't have to do mouth to mouth on this gal who had dirt all over her.

On another occasion, I officiated at a garden wedding on a hot July morning. The groom who had never drank before, had attended a bachelor's party the night before. When I said, "Do you?" he did ... all over his lovely bride and me as he turned his head in an all out effort to bring it under control. After we recovered, we started all over. When the service was finally complete, he said, "Pastor, I hope I never see you again! I would be too embarrassed!"

Yes, life is filled with bloopers and blunders. If you haven't had one lately, don't worry. Your time is coming.

I have always been afraid that on some occasion such as a wedding or a funeral, I would make a major blunder. So far I have managed to keep it together but I know my blunder is out there waiting to happen.

I'm going to enjoy writing this column each month. I come from a family of writers. My sister wrote books that no one would read. My brother wrote songs that no one would sing. My

mother wrote plays no one would see and my father wrote checks that no one could cash!

As for me, I'm the eternal optimist. I write in the full knowledge that you are looking for a juicy bit of wisdom from the Pastor and will memorize each and every article I write so here is the pearl you have been expecting as you have dived into this elongated diatribe: Our God is a God who not merely restores, but takes up our mistakes and follies into His plan for us and brings good out of them. This is part of the wonder of his gracious sovereignty.

I'm so glad I worship a God who forgives my mistakes as well as my gross sin. Boy-o-boy, all of us blow it at times. The good news is that God became a man – the man Jesus. He experienced life with all its temptations and trials but with one difference: He made no blunders. He lived a perfect life and then gave that life for you and me.

Forgiveness.

What a wonderful word. It's God's gift to every person seeking it. Today He walks up and down the streets of the

Please see PASTOR on P. 20



The Sierra Shadows 4H club held its monthly club meeting on Dec. 7, 2010 at Sierra View Elementary School cafeteria. At their December meeting, the club had their annual Christmas potluck and the 4H members exchanged ornaments with each other. The members also collected and donated 17 toys for the Toys for Tots program. One of the club's community service projects was completed at the Sierra Shadows 4H club meeting held in November when the members made 12 homemade blankets for the senior citizens. Their next community service project planned for later this year will be to collect canned food.

Several of the Sierra Shadow 4H club members will be making food items and participating at Favorite Food Day where they are judged on flavor, texture and ap-

pearance. They will also be participating in a Consumer Science Judging Contest. This event will be held on Saturday, Jan. 22 at Life Change Community Church, 717 Robertson Blvd., Chowchilla, from 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Several of the Sierra Shadow 4H club members will be participating at Small Animal Expo where they are judged on their knowledge and showmanship of their animals (dogs, poultry, exotic birds and rabbits). This event will be held at the Madera County Fairgrounds on Feb. 5 at 1 p.m. Livestock Expo will be held at the Madera County Fairgrounds on March 26.

Olivia Fernandez and Mikaela Fringer are two of five 2010-2011 California Focus Delegates. They will be working on a citizenship project over the next year and will travel to our state's capital in June.

Youth between the ages of 9 to 18 years old may join 4H. The Sierra Shadows 4H club leader is Terri Fernandez who can be reached at 645-4836. Then next club meeting will be held at the Sierra View Elementary School cafeteria on Feb. 8 at 6:30 p.m.

STOCK cont. from P. 7

Sierra View Elementary became part of Golden Valley Unified they both had black chalkboards in the class rooms. Now they both have white boards to eliminate chalk dust and allow teachers to use color when they use the board for class. Also, another piece of technology called a "Smart Board" was added to many of the elementary, middle and high school class rooms. Teachers have had a struggle to keep up with class room technology. It certainly has not been easy. Record keeping for teachers is complicated but important.

Golden Valley Unified School Board has two new members to start 2011. They have already been installed and ready to start serving our community. Welcome to Kathleen Crumpton and Brian Freeman and returning board member Mona Diaz. They will join Mike Kelly and Mark Toole to start work and it will be work with the cuts that Sacramento is making to the school budget.

Some things take a long time but are worth waiting for. Ed Waldron, one of our Ranchos Hills Seniors, was finally interviewed for the Pearl Harbor Survivors' Association after waiting for 69 years. His daughter kept telling him to fill out the paperwork and to do the interview then he would get the Pearl Harbor cap that he has been wanting. After waiting all this time he finally has his Pearl Harbor cap. His daughter has only been pushing him for the last 30 years to join the Pearl Harbor Survivors' Association. So on Monday, January 10 Ed finally became a member of the Association and can wear his cap proudly.

The Ranchos/Hills Seniors want to thank the community for supporting our Christmas Home Tour and Tea. Every dollar we make supports our Senior Center. The Senior Center's monthly sale in January was canceled because of the cold and wet weather that Saturday. Everyone needed to stay home and stay warm that day. The next Senior Center Sale will be Feb. 5. Hope for good weather!

CRIME ALERT

Home Burglary Alert to the Community

The City of Madera Crime Prevention Unit is warning the community about recent burglaries of homes where the suspects break into a vacant house, then when the residents next door to the vacant house leave for work, the suspects break in through a resident's side door by kicking it in, or by lifting the slider door off its tracks.

If you, or anyone you know, lives next to, or near a vacant house, please keep an eye out for anything that looks out of the ordinary. The suspects might even be driving their car into the vacant home's garage and loading it up inside the garage, then driving away without being seen.

For more information, please contact Durbin Lloren, Crime Prevention Officer with the City of Madera Police Department at 559-673-9362 or 559-675-4200.

PASTOR cont. from P. 19


Ranchos and wants to grant you forgiveness and be a part of your everyday life. If you want to know Him better, just drop into one of the several really good churches here in the Ranchos. There you will find Him in the lives of men and women who are waiting to be your friend.

Pastor's Prayer:

Lord, bless the folks who call the Ranchos home today. We sure are glad you allow us to live in this fantastic community. As we see each other on the street and at the neat little shopping center, remind us that each person is special to you and that we need to be loving, kind and patient as we go about making our uncertain way, blunders and all.

Amen.

David Jones is the Pastor of Golden Valley Baptist Church at 12414 Road 37 in the Madera Ranchos. You can reach him through the church website at www.goldenvalleychurch.com. You can send him an email from the website and he'll write back.



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How Did We Get Here?

By Steve Wayte

With the growing discontent over our country's serious problems, the more we learn the better we'll affect necessary changes within our government. A mission of the Tea Party is informing and educating citizens. Serafin Quintanar shared information about the high speed rail last month and this month Steve Wayte informs us about our country's monetary system.

Sandy Forbes, Madera Ranchos Tea Party

Individuals and families in Madera Ranchos and the entire country are hurting. High unemployment, falling home prices, 401k and pensions losing value. How did we get here?

The simple answer: We have lost our way due to ignorance of the United States Constitution. Article 1, Section 10 of the Constitution states, "No State shall ... make anything but gold and silver coin a tender in payment of debts ..." Yet 100 years ago, a private group of banking interests thought it wise to take control of our country's monetary system creating the Federal Reserve. Our country has a long history of fighting these types of interests. Even before our Constitution was ratified there were

many lively debates on whether it was wise to have a central banking system. Thomas Jefferson even lamented, "I believe that banking institutions are more dangerous to our liberties than standing armies. If the American people ever allow private banks to control the issue of their currency, first by inflation, then by deflation, the banks and corporations that will grow up around [the banks] will deprive the people of all property until their children wakeup homeless on the continent their fathers conquered. The issuing power should be taken from the banks and restored to the people, to whom it properly belongs."

In 1913 the bankers were able to hoodwink the American people by creating a "gold standard." By doing so, it helped alleviate any constitutional questions. They would only be allowed to print money with a set amount

of gold and silver in reserves. The problem is the American people never got to audit the reserves, so it turned into a system of faith with the bankers to be the trustworthy while the American people were the ones left with faith.

During the Great Depression, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, wanted to borrow money from Saudi Arabia, but the Saudis balked at this notion as their country was losing faith in our paper currency. Roosevelt made it illegal to hold gold coins. The American people were forced to turn their gold in at a set price, the gold in turn was shipped to

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Saudi Arabia and Roosevelt was able to attain the loan he requested from the Saudis. The problem during this transaction was gold rose sharply, the dollar devalued and the American people were unknowingly victims of fraud and theft. Inflation is one of the most insidious forms of taxation and theft. With it, the American people have no way of protecting their prosperity. But this process can only happen with fiat paper currency. Fiat is

silver still in the currency system kept inflation quite low for the post-Depression period up to 1964. But after the removal of silver in the mid 60's, inflation skyrocketed. A home bought for \$15,000 in 1965 was worth \$300,000 by 2007. Four pre-1965 quarters have nearly \$20 worth of value at today's market prices, so essentially our dollar has 5% of the purchasing power it had as recently as 1965.

The booms and busts are created by people that have their foot on the gas pedal of our economy. By inflating and deflating the currency, lowering and raising of interest rates, the business cycle is distorted. Many people bought homes they could not afford. They bought anyway, seeing the runaway prices, for fear of losing the American Dream. The soft lending practices also contributed to this disaster, but these types of practices can only happen in a controlled Central Banking System. In a Free Market Banking System very few people would be put in a moral, hazardous position; there would still be a natural business cycle, but not any that leave our children broke and homeless.

Madera Ranchos and Madera City Join for Tea Party Meetings

The Madera Ranchos Tea Party has joined the City of Madera Tea Party. This first joint meeting was Thursday, Jan. 20 at 5:30 p.m. at Burrito King, 319 North Gateway in Madera. Guest speaker was 25th District State Assembly Member, Kristin Olsen.

For more information contact John Smedley at 645-7031. His email address is jcsmedley@comcast.net. You can also visit the Tea Party's website online at www.centralvalleyteaparty.com.

ANSWERS

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

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Just Like Cats & Dogs

by Dave T. Phipps



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ARIES (March 21 to April 19) Single Lambs looking for romance could find Cupid especially accommodating this week. Paired partners also find their relationships benefiting from the chubby cherub's attention.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20) Keep your keen Bull's eye focused on your target, and shake off any attempt to turn your attention elsewhere. You should get some news later in the week that might answer some questions.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20) Your early enthusiasm for a project might have been somewhat premature. Although you feel positive about it, you might need more information in order to make an informed decision.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22) Taking on a new responsibility might seem like the politically correct thing to do. But even with the promise of support, was it the wisest? Consider reassessing your upcoming decision.

LEO (July 23 to August 22) Apply yourself to completing your task despite all the distractions that might be interfering with your work. Then reward yourself with a weekend of fun shared with people who are close to you.

VIRGO (August 23 to September 22) A business agreement from the past might need to be looked at again. Use this unexpected development to check out other matters related to it. A weekend venture proves to be rewarding.

LIBRA (September 23 to October 22) Don't ignore that uneasy feeling about making a commitment. It could be a case of understandably cold feet, or a warning that something isn't as right as it should be.

SCORPIO (October 23 to November 21) A colleague could be more supporting of one of your efforts. But it's up to you to make the case for it, and that could mean opening up a secret or two, which might be a problem for you.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22 to December 21) Expect some good news about a relative you've been worried about. But don't expect the full story to be told -- at least not yet. A workplace matter might face shifting priorities.

CAPRICORN (December 22 to January 19) Despite some anxious moments, you could have good reason to be pleased with how things are turning out. An end-of-the-week call might hold some interesting information.

AQUARIUS (January 20 to February 18) A long-overdue expression of appreciation could be offered soon. But admit it: You never really expected it would happen, right? Meanwhile, keep your weekend options open.

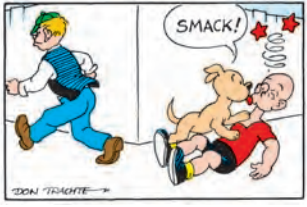
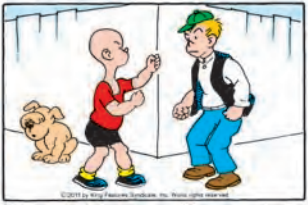
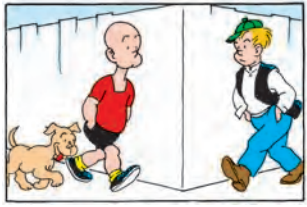
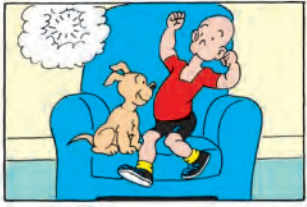
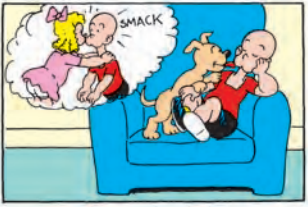
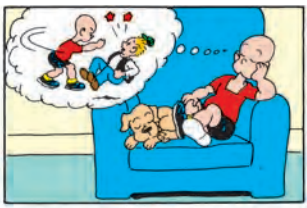
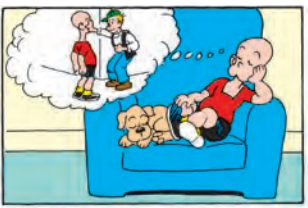
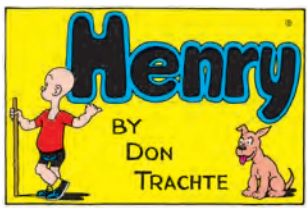
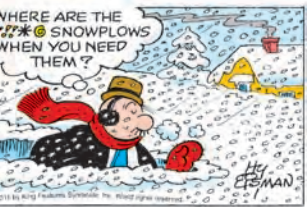
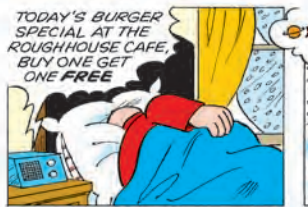
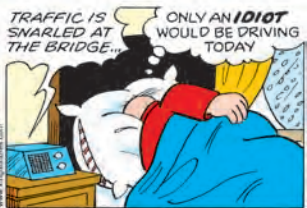
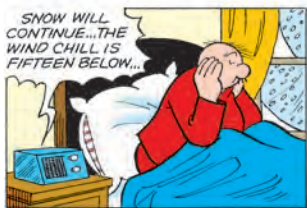
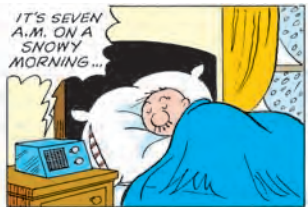
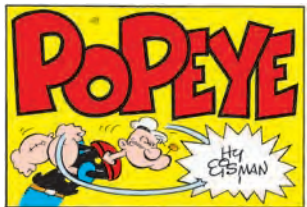
PISCES (February 19 to March 20) It's a good time to dive right into a new challenge, whether it's learning a computer program or how to drive a stick shift, or making a new friend. Whatever it is, good luck.

Born this Week

You see the wisdom in honesty,
and you help others appreciate your vision.

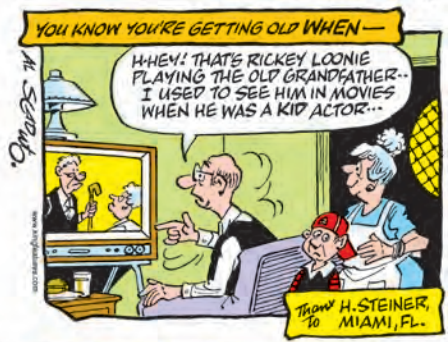
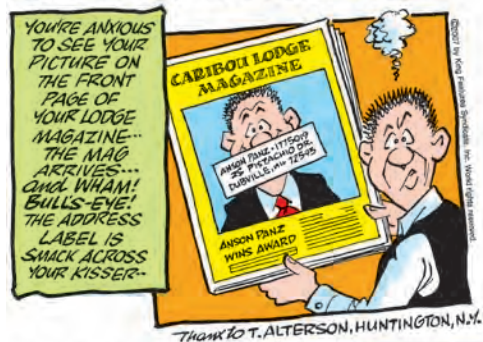
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FUN PAGES



THEY'LL DO IT EVERY TIME

BY AL SCADUTO



LIKE IT IS DEPT'L IN TEENAGER HEKKIE'S ROOM, THE DRAWERS, CLOSETS, CABINETS ARE LOADED WITH JUNK... and WHAT IS EMPTY and NEVER USED? ASK MOM... SHE KNOWS...

Thank to ADAM & LAUREN S., NASHVILLE, TENN.



RIDDLE CARD

- When is corn like a question?
- What is the center of gravity?
- When is a rope like a child at school?
- What letters are in-visible, but never out of sight?
- When do your teeth sound just like your tongue?

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Answers: 1. When you are popping it. 2. The letter 'V'. 3. When it is taught (taut). 4. I and S. 5. When they chatter.

ANOTHER BETCHA! Hand someone a big shirt and bet them that they can't put in on and button it up in 30 seconds. In most cases you'll win your bet, because after they put it on, they will start with the top button and button it "down," not "up," as you stated in your challenge.



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

- | | |
|---------|------|
| 1. ACT | USES |
| 2. DUE | OWED |
| 3. WALL | AND |
| 4. BAN | LED |
| 5. ERR | ION |
| 6. CALL | ALLY |

Answers: Action, dualed, walled, dualed, banally, errand, calluses.

Wishing Well

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

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 ● REMOVE IT

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

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

- | | | | |
|-----------|----------|------------|-----------|
| Abolish | Delete | Expunge | Take down |
| Amputate | Discard | Revoke | Uproot |
| Carry off | Erase | Rub out | Withdraw |
| Cross out | Excavate | Strike out | |

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Junior Whirl

by Charles Barry Townsend

IT'S TEE-OFF TIME ON THE FRONT NINE!

Try making par on the following nine-word course! The grid to the left has room for nine words, and they all contain a "tee." Hints are given below.

- A type of drum.
 - A spirited horse.
 - A type of beard.
 - A military snack bar.
 - He didn't ask to go.
 - A large aquatic mammal.
 - Witty conversation.
 - Found in the mouth.
 - A string puller.
- Answers: 1. Steel 2. Steed 3. Coaster 4. Canoe 5. Draftee 6. Manatee 7. Reparaté 8. Eyeteeth 9. Puppeter.

TRIVIA TEST

By Fifi Rodriguez

- LITERATURE: What was O. Henry's real name?
- RELIGION: What was the Holy Grail?
- MOVIES: How many best-actor Oscar nominations did Spencer Tracy receive in his career?
- GOVERNMENT: What are the two houses of the British Parliament called?
- ANATOMY: What part of the human body does the disorder lumbago usually strike?
- GEOGRAPHY: What U.S. state lies west of Texas?
- U.S. PRESIDENTS: During which president's administration did Henry Kissinger become secretary of state?
- MUSIC: For which war was the song "Over There" written?
- PSYCHOLOGY: What fear is represented by doraphobia?
- HISTORY: When did Andrei Sakharov win the Nobel Peace Prize?

- ### Answers
- William Sydney Porter
 - A vessel used by Jesus at the Last Supper
 - Nine
 - The House of Lords and the House of Commons
 - The back
 - New Mexico
 - Richard Nixon
 - World War I
 - A fear of fur
 10. 1975

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Click on "Local News" at

Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps



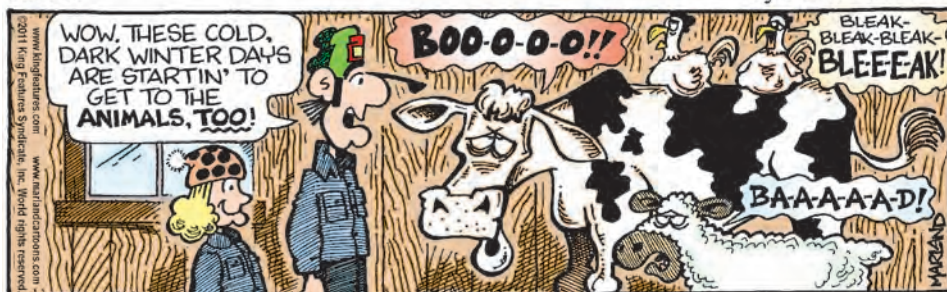
Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas



R.F.D.

by Mike Marland



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JERRY CRAFT



The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



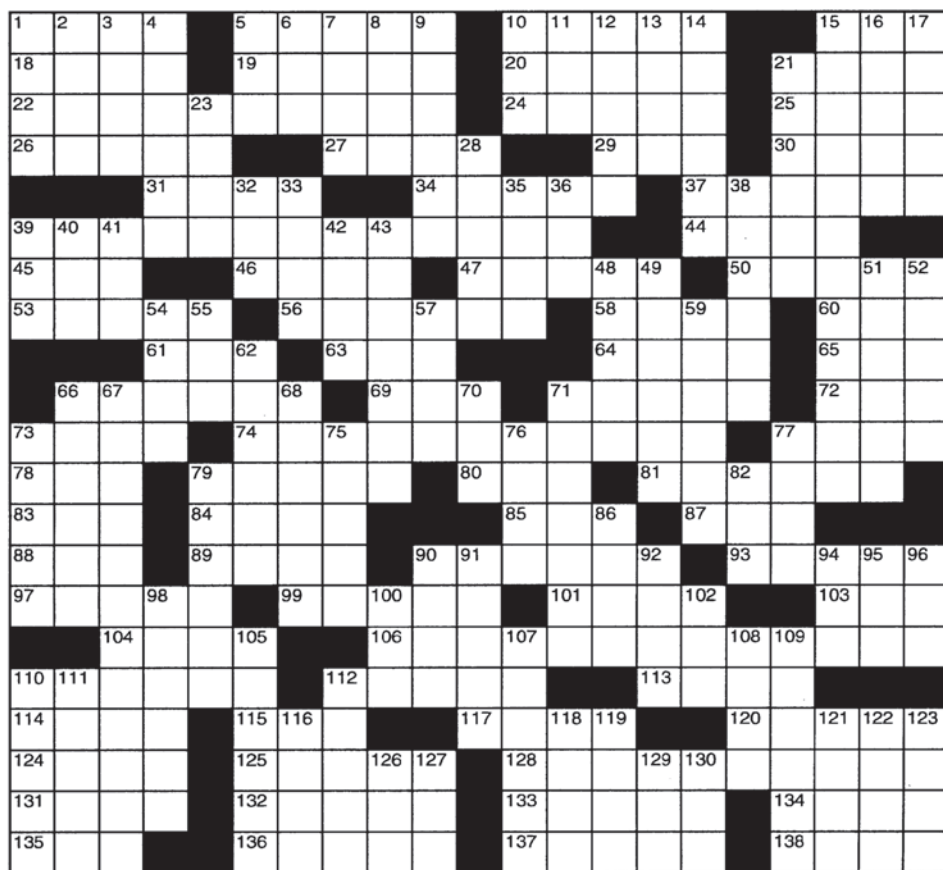
HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels. Differences: 1. "Today" sign is missing. 2. Scarf is black. 3. Boy's pants are not plaid. 4. More bricks are on wall. 5. Poster notes are different. 6. Boy's pants are not plaid.

Super Crossword



- ACROSS**
- 1 Enjoys an enchilada
 - 5 Cargo crane
 - 10 Circus employee
 - 15 Hilarious Howard
 - 18 What you used to be
 - 19 Mennonite group
 - 20 Cheer
 - 21 Planted
 - 22 Bovine jazzman?
 - 24 Famed fabulist
 - 25 Geometric figure
 - 26 Chrissie of The Pretenders
 - 27 Warts and all
 - 29 Actress Munson
 - 30 "May I interrupt?"
 - 31 Certain Semite
 - 34 Rocker Cassidy
 - 37 Pay
 - 39 Bovine auto racer?
 - 44 Fit
 - 45 Crony
 - 46 Director Ferrara
 - 47 Rock's — Trick
 - 50 Yellowish brown
 - 53 Chasm
 - 56 Adams or Astor
 - 58 Couch
 - 60 Maris of "Nurses"
 - 61 LAX letters
 - 63 Kimono closer
 - 64 Jab
 - 65 Noisy racket
 - 66 Mystical
 - 69 German city
 - 71 Electronic device
 - 72 Say please
 - 73 "Beat it!"
 - 74 Bovine outlaw?
 - 77 Satiat
 - 78 — Aviv
 - 79 Free-for-all
 - 80 Word with sister or story
 - 81 Costume sparkler
 - 83 Actor Kjellin
 - 84 Learn fast?
 - 85 Spare tire
 - 87 Johnny Yuma, for one
 - 88 Mythical bird
 - 89 Periodic table abbr.
 - 90 Gave someone a smack
 - 93 Writer Runyon
 - 97 Rise
 - 99 Go in
 - 101 Beholds
 - 103 Southern constellation
 - 104 Sue of "Lolita"
 - 106 Bovine actress?
 - 110 "Cat —" ('65 film)
 - 112 Exodus edible
 - 113 Prudish one
 - 114 Melville work
 - 115 "— Day Now" ('62 hit)
 - 117 To be, to Baudelaire
 - 120 Entangle
 - 124 Puzzle direction
 - 125 Chutzpah
 - 128 Bovine publisher?
 - 131 Ages
 - 132 Church law
 - 133 Brinks
 - 134 Banana-rama, e.g.
 - 135 Actress Susan
 - 136 Endangered animal
 - 137 Adjust a watch
 - 138 Time to evolve?
 - 4 Dairy treat
 - 5 Smidgen
 - 6 Internists' org.
 - 7 Jet-setter's need
 - 8 Egyptian deity
 - 9 Religious belief
 - 10 Bristol brew
 - 11 Bristol brew
 - 12 Jocular Jackie
 - 13 School founded in 1440
 - 14 Meal
 - 15 Bovine boxer?
 - 16 Proprietor
 - 17 "— Mine" ('85 film)
 - 21 Justice Antonin
 - 23 St.-to-be
 - 28 Astound
 - 32 Chicken — king
 - 33 Iceberg's kin
 - 35 '68 US Open winner
 - 36 Exploit
 - 38 Small mall
 - 39 Hydro-therapy site
 - 40 Actor Hunter
 - 41 TV Tarzan
 - 42 Franco of "Camelot"
 - 43 Drop
 - 48 Salad type
 - 49 Spongelike
 - 51 Bright inventor?
 - 52 Like Lincoln
 - 54 Splinter group
 - 55 Alphabet sequence
 - 57 Ingratiating
 - 59 Silo stuff
 - 62 Victoria's husband
 - 66 It's spotted at zoos
 - 67 Bovine band-leader?
 - 68 Louisiana university
 - 70 Geographical abbr.
 - 71 "Clair de Lune" composer
 - 73 Celebrities
 - 75 Car bomb?
 - 76 Grabs all the goodies
 - 77 Neighbor of Hispaniola
 - 79 Bob of basketball
 - 82 Proof letters
 - 86 Rock hound?
 - 90 Eager
 - 91 Castle or Cara
 - 92 "How — Is Your Love" ('77 hit)
 - 94 Deface
 - 95 Supper scrap
 - 96 Slangy denial
 - 98 Stockings
 - 100 TV listing abbr.
 - 102 Big —, CA
 - 105 Shade of meaning
 - 107 Ecclesiastical title
 - 108 Sage
 - 109 Put the match to
 - 110 Portended
 - 111 "That's —" ('65 film)
 - 112 Loy or Blyth
 - 116 "A Face in the Crowd" actress
 - 118 Discourteous
 - 119 They're often beaten
 - 121 Curly coif
 - 122 Equine accessory
 - 123 Aphrodite's son
 - 126 "— Ryan's Express"
 - 127 Remnant
 - 129 TV's "— Haw"
 - 130 Presidential monogram
- DOWN**
- 1 Decorate glass
 - 2 Nautical cry
 - 3 Wilder's "Our —"

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IMPORTANT NOTICE FOR AREA RESIDENTS!

SEM CU
south east madera county united

**The
SEM CU annual meeting
has been RESCHEDULED!**

**Monday, February 28 at 6:30 p.m.
Ranchos Pizza Factory**

the Monday, January 24 meeting will be a regular
Board meeting at 6:30 p.m. at Pizza Factory

EVERYONE IS WELCOME AND ENCOURAGED TO COME!

**Got water problems? • Got traffic problems?
Got a Community Center? • Got a park?**

GET INVOLVED!

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

559-363-9095 • www.semcu.org • info@semcu.org

SEM CU • FOR THE COMMUNITY! BY THE COMMUNITY!

**The Ranchos Pizza Factory is located at 37184 Avenue 12 in the Madera Ranchos
For copies of SEM CU's meeting agendas and minutes visit www.semcu.org**

IMPORTANT NOTICE FOR AREA RESIDENTS!