

# The Ranchos Independent



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## Brett Frazier

**The Ranchos resident is the new supervisor for District 1**

**He opens up to the Ranchos Independent about his thoughts on District 1, the Ranchos and his vision for our future**

**By DJ Becker**

*Photo courtesy of Anna Katherine Photography*

***In This Issue***

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# Possible Kidnap Attempt in Ranchos

By Randy Bailey

The Madera County Sheriff's Department is investigating a possible attempted kidnapping of a teenage girl in the Madera Ranchos on Tuesday, Jan. 20.

According to Sheriff's deputies, a late-model, black-colored mini-van pulled up alongside a teenager near Manon Ave. and Road 35 1/2 in the early evening hours on Tuesday when an unidentified male subject exited the van, grabbed the teenager and attempted to force her into the van. The girl (whose name is not being released) managed to escape.

The male suspect is described as a male adult wearing all black clothing and a black ski mask. The driver of the van was described as a female who was wearing all black clothing.

On Wednesday, Jan. 21, Madera County Sheriff Detectives developed in-

formation regarding a possible witness to the attempted kidnapping. At about 4:30 to 4:50 p.m. a white vehicle was travelling on Road 35½ and encountered a black or dark colored mini-van driving in the wrong lane of traffic. This mini-van was the vehicle allegedly involved in the attempt to kidnap the girl. Detectives believe the driver or occupants of the white vehicle may remember the dark colored mini-van and ask that they call the Sheriff's Office and provide any possible details about the mini-van or its occupants. If you have any information about the suspects or the black-colored van you are urged to call the Madera County Sheriff's Department at 559-675-7770.

In a seemingly unrelated, yet similar, turn of events, Madera County Sheriff's Deputies are investigating an attempt kid-

Please see **KIDNAP** on P. 19

## In the Shadows: Human Trafficking in Madera

By Christi McKinney

"With drugs you make the sale and the transaction is done. However, with human trafficking you are able to sell this person over and over," said Robin Leppo Kerr, executive director of the Madera County Child Abuse Prevention Council to a hushed crowd at the Protecting our Children Town Hall meeting that was held on Jan. 20 at the VFW Hall in Madera under the sponsorship of Madera County Supervisor, Rick Farinelli.

Every year, millions of men, women and children are trafficked in countries around the world. Human trafficking is now considered the most profitable international crime, second only to illicit drug trafficking. It has been likened to modern-day slavery and is a \$32 billion global industry, involving over 100,000 children in the United States alone. Traffickers look for people who are susceptible for a vari-

ety of reasons, including psychological or emotional vulnerability, economic hardship or lack of a social safety net. Traffickers are often looking for boys between the ages of 11-13 and girls between the ages of 12-14. The victims are used either for forced labor or prostitution. Trafficking has been reported in all 50 states, and is particularly high in California, where easy access to the port and highway system enables easy transport across the entire nation. Three of the nation's top 13 High Intensity Child Prostitution areas identified by the FBI are Los Angeles, San Francisco and the San Diego Metropolitan areas. Madera sits on a major trafficking highway right between these areas.

"As Madera is a rest stop for many

Please see **TRAFFIC** on P. 10



By DJ Becker

Picture courtesy of DJ Becker

New District 1 Supervisor Brett Frazier, right, chats with Alyssa Vincent, an employee at the Ranchos Café in the Madera Ranchos, about issues and lunch.

The first few weeks of January have been a blur of activity for new Madera County District 1 Supervisor, Brett Frazier, but Frazier said he has hit the ground running and has enjoyed every minute of it.

Glad to have the campaign over, Frazier said there's been a lot to learn and quite a few challenges with new people to meet within the large county government organization.

"Even with the steep learning curve, I already know I love the job," Frazier said. "I have also talked to quite a few of the residents that have reached out to me in the office. At this local level you see things you can effect or do for people. Sometimes just by listening to them. It makes me feel like I am making a difference. I'd like to serve as long as the people of District 1 will have me," he said with a smile.

"The Ranchos community has also been great these last two years I have lived here. The residents are very engaged and knowledgeable on the issues," he said.

Frazier credits his experience serving on the Madera City Council and as the Mayor of Madera from 2010 to 2013 with peaking his interest for local politics and community service. During that time Frazier also served as chair and vice chair of the Madera Redevelopment Agency, Housing Authority and Transportation Commissions, among other committees. Even though city council members and the mayor were unpaid positions, Frazier said the commitment by residents to com-

munity service is essential in good local government and said he values those ongoing, good working relationships he established within the city.

"I want to be the voice for the residents in my district and work on their behalf. I made a commitment to be very accessible (to all residents), and have already started office hours on Thursdays now. Anyone with a concern can call, and or, come into the office and meet with me. There's been a great (response from residents) and it's already been packed." To schedule a Thursday meeting with Frazier residents can call 662-6010.

### A Full Time Supervisor

Frazier said he was aware of the recent controversy of raising pay for Madera County supervisors and the questions raised by some residents whether supervisors and their staff were working full time and earning their pay. The current annual base salary of approximately \$71,500 with benefits and mileage for elected county supervisors is more than double the median income of most residents in the county.

"I voted against the pay raise, along with Supervisor Rogers. I also plan to be active and work full time for Madera County residents on their behalf," he said. "Before I made this decision to run as a supervisor, I looked at my business schedule and spoke with my family. It is a challenging time management issue but I have good full time managers in my [business] locations, and I can manage a lot electronically and with point of sale access

Please see **FRAZIER** on P. 3

**FRAZIER** cont. from P. 2

these days.”

Frazier said he plans to be very accessible to residents and wants his office to be “information friendly.” He has plans for a newsletter and quarterly evening town hall meetings for residents in most local areas. He currently has an active Facebook page for residents to reach him and is working on his Twitter skills. “My Facebook skills

are good but Twitter – it’s a work in progress. But I am hoping to get that going too,” he said.

**The County Budget - the Main Challenge**

Delving into and learning the large and complex \$200 million Madera County budget has been his biggest challenge so far and is the priority because money determines what can or can’t be accomplished.

“The county budget is definitely im-

proving but we are still not out of the woods from the collapse,” Frazier said. “We are narrowing the [deficit] gap through years of fiscal responsibility and cuts but we still have to live within our means.” He says he plans to be very hands on with the budget. “It’s a very important aspect. If you don’t know how much money you have and where it’s being spent you can’t make the best decisions to serve the community, or see where you can

help.”

“It’s funny – in the private business sector you usually have two pages with budgets, a profit and loss and a balance sheet, and you can pretty much tell what you have going on with those two pieces of paper. When you get into public finance it’s more complex – 100 pages, different funds, transfers, etc. Right now I am going

Please see **FRAZIER** on P. 7

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Letters

Dear Editor:

My name is Warren Parr. I have been regularly attending Madera School Board meetings since 1992. First at Madera Unified and later at Golden Valley Unified. In that span of 23 years, I have attended approximately 700 school board, special school board, school board workshops and school board-appointed Blue Ribbon Panel meetings. I have been recognized as the parent of the year in each district. I also own and have operated my own small business for the last 30 years. I have seen a lot and learned a lot. I'm writing you today out of a GREAT CONCERN for the future of the Golden Valley Unified School District.

In last November's general election, much of the nation rejected liberal fiscal policy. In the Ranchos, we did the opposite by electing and re-electing fiscally liberal school board members, led by trustee John Mosley. Trustee Mosley is a long-time union organizer. In fact, he personally organized the California School Employees Association Union (CSEA) currently operating in the Golden Valley Unified School District. In personal discussions with Trustee Mosley, it is my opinion his primary objective in running for the school board was to protect the union he organized and protect his legacy. Trustee Mosley has substantial support from the newly elected board of directors. Newly elected Trustee Carla Neal is a teacher for Fresno City College and therefore a member of a teachers union. She certainly has not said or done anything that would lead me to believe she is anything other than pro union. Re-elected trustee, and now board president, Kathleen Crumpton has been the most pro-labor, pro-union board member in the Golden Valley Unified School District over the past four years. She has been using her position, in my opinion, to cultivate union support in her on-going attempt to fire the current superintendent. The three have formed a majority coalition and now there is nothing keeping them from accomplishing these objectives.

The district's union representatives will tell you they have not received a raise in about seven years. That's not true. The union teachers for instance (of whom I am most familiar) receive increased compensation in five ways: They receive increased compensation due to time employed; increased education; increases in contributions to health and welfare packages; increases in contributions to retirement benefits; and a COLA (Cost of Living Adjustment). Of those, the only compensation that has NOT INCREASED is the COLA. Trustee Mosely wants to change that by giving Golden Valley Unified School District union employees the largest COLA increase he can as fast as he can.

Our school district operates kind of like a franchise. The district has set attendance boundaries and cannot encroach upon other districts' boundaries for the purpose of increasing our market share (students) and thereby increasing our revenue. Also, the district cannot increase revenue

by raising its prices. The district's revenue is primarily set by the state of California. GVUSD receives approximately \$7000 per student per year with 100 percent attendance. Therefore, the revenue coming into the district is relatively fixed. We cannot grow the size of our pie. If we increase labor spending, we have to decrease spending in other areas. Students on average directly receive only about five percent of budget spending (\$15 million) due to the fact, in my opinion, they have no direct representation in the bargaining process to lobby for their interests as the unions do.

Student enrollment in GVUSD district has been in decline for years. In this 2014-2015 school year, kindergarten enrollment sharply fell by about 50 students. When Trustee Mosley realized this fact, he became enraged. Decreased enrollment means less revenue and the large COLA raise he planned on giving his union would be in jeopardy. He blames the lack of kindergarten enrollment on district mismanagement which he alleges caused Ranchos parents to transfer those students out of GVUSD. Prior to the last election, I only saw Trustee Mosley at a GVUSD Board Meeting twice. To my recollection I never saw Trustee Neal until she became a candidate. Where were they when the district was in the middle of a crisis and hard decisions were being made? They were AWOL. Trustee Mosley has no direct knowledge of the decisions made by those previous boards or the direction given to the two different superintendents. What direct evidence do you have for your allegations, Trustee Mosley? I have attended approximately 80 percent of GVUSD Board Meetings since 2003. I was not AWOL. I, as a community member, was involved and invested in the preservation of the school district and the best interest of those students.

I see it differently.

First, it appears to me, the age of the Ranchos population is increasing. I don't think it's reasonable to think we will be reproducing children at the same rate as our past. Second, the poor economy has stopped new housing development within the district boundaries and young people are not moving into the district. Third, the drought. People are cautious about moving into our community due to the water crisis. Fourth, liberal curriculum mandated by the state has caused many to leave the government schools and choose the home school or private school option. The declining enrollment from my perspective is a symptom. The CAUSE is liberal environmental policies that have shut off water and construction in our district, and liberal policies that have lengthened the depression. If we eliminate the CAUSE, the symptoms will disappear. Liberals blame others for their failed policies. Just look at our president. It's never their liberal policies, it's always the mismanagement of their policies. Trustee Mosley is true to his core. He is looking for someone to

Please see LETTERS on P. 16

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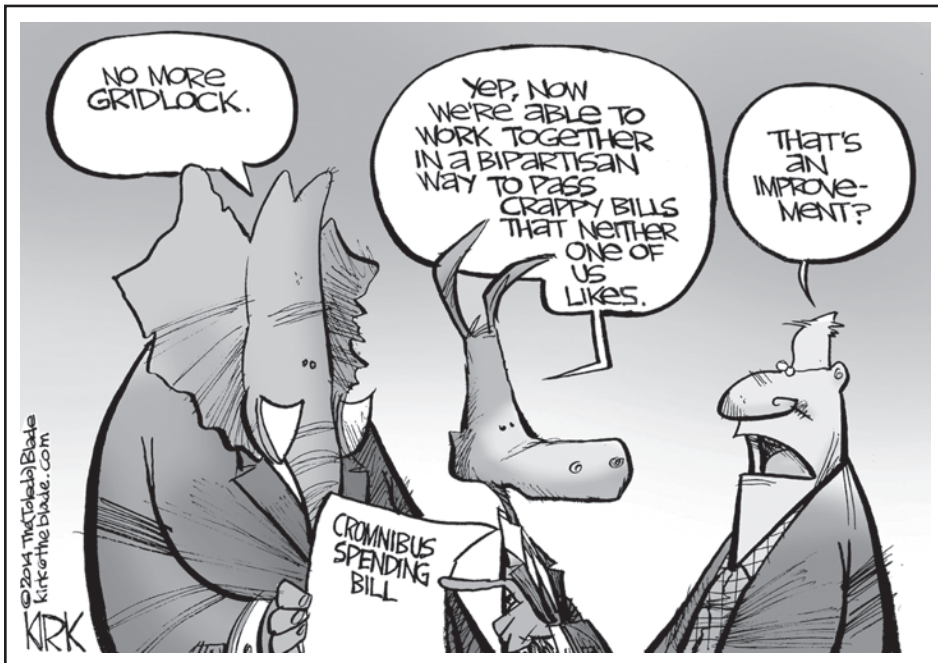
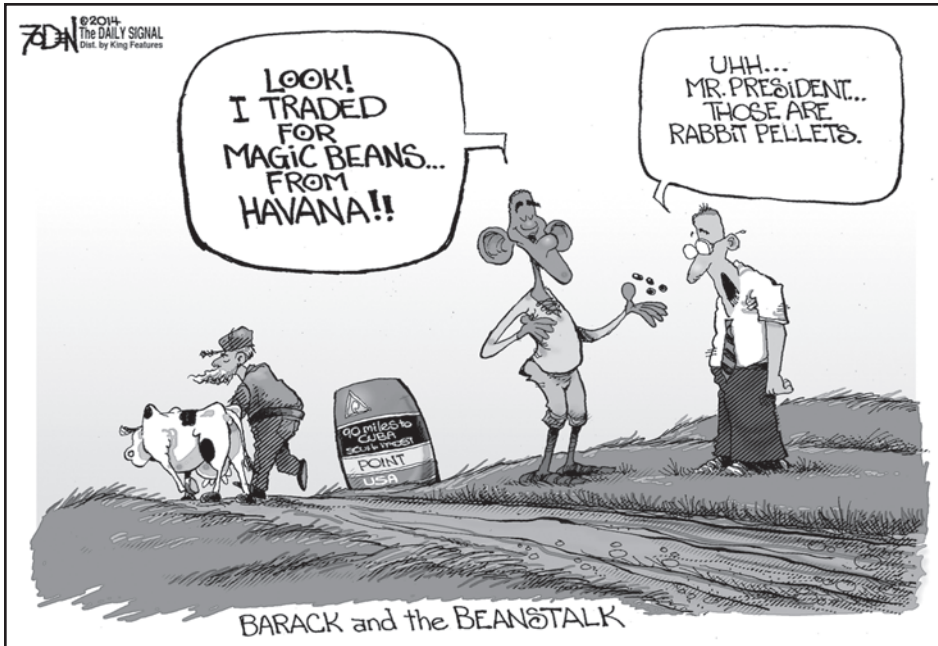
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## Guest Editorial

# Obama's Cuban Olive Branch

By Rich Lowry

Candidate Barack Obama said that, as president, he would talk to anti-American dictators without precondition. He didn't mention that he would also give them historic policy concessions without precondition.

His surprise unilateral change in the U.S. posture toward the Castro dictatorship came without even the pretense of serious promises by the Cubans to reform their kleptocratic, totalitarian rule.

The trade of Alan Gross, the American aid worker jailed in Cuba for the offense of trying to help Jewish Cubans get on the Internet, for three Cuban spies is understandable (we also got back one of our spies, and Cuba released several dozen political prisoners as a sweetener).

The rest of Obama's sweeping revisions -- diplomatic relations and the loosening of every economic sanction he can plausibly change on his own -- are freely granted, no questions asked. It is quid with no pro quo.

There is no doubt that economic sanctions are a blunt and dubious instrument, and reasonable people can disagree about their wisdom (I've gone back and forth about the Cuban embargo through the years). But dictatorial regimes hate them for a reason. All things considered, they want more eco-

nomie wherewithal rather than less.

Cuba is heavily dependent on the largesse of its ideological partner Venezuela, whose irrational, left-wing policies have helped trash its economy. Just as the Cuban dictatorship faces the dire prospect of the collapse of Venezuela's support, here comes El Yanqui to cushion the blow. The Castro regime will take a cut of the increased trade, remittances and tourism that will spring from Obama's concessions.

Consider tourism. The Cuban military has an enormous holding company called GAESA. One of its companies, Gaviota, operates an extensive network of hotels and resorts, according to the strategic consultancy Stratfor. Imagine if the Pentagon owned the Marriott and Hilton hotel chains. That is the Cuban tourism industry in a nutshell.

About a million Canadian tourists go to Cuba every year. In total, more than 2 million tourists visit annually, and yet the Castro regime is still standing.

It is true, of course, that the embargo -- which Obama can't lift on his own -- hasn't ended the Castro regime. On the other hand, there is little reason to believe that lifting the embargo will end it, either. Our vast trade with China hasn't yet made Beijing any less repressive.

The Cuba embargo is condemned as a relic of the Cold War, but it is the regime itself that is a relic, an inhuman jackboot left over from the era when people actually professed to believe in workers' paradises.

There are holdout believers, still. The liberal elite has often treated Fidel Castro as a cute, plucky figure of defiance, and even now, the government has determined apologists in the U.S. Congress.

If Cuba were a racist apartheid-style system rather than a communist dictatorship, no one would be so eager to do business with it. The great and good celebrate the Obama changes as the end of an era. But they will replenish the coffers of a Cold War regime that is stubbornly still standing.

*Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review.*

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# Four-Letter Word: Jury Duty

Jury Duty should be a four-letter word. It's never convenient, it always involves a lot of waiting and I am quite certain that every courthouse in the state has a team of people whose sole purpose is to procure the most uncomfortable chairs in the county and set them up in the jury assembly room. I'm not sure which is less comfortable, those chairs or a giant boulder covered with fire ants the size of your fist. And what is with the thermostats? Is there no possible temperature option other than swelter or freeze? Suffice to say, it is not a pleasant experience and many people wouldn't choose it over a root canal or invasive surgery.

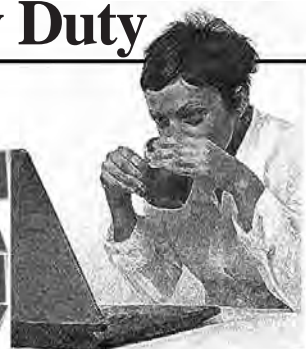
I got my Jury Summons a few weeks ago, made my phone call the night before, and to my surprise I was actually confirmed to show up. Though I've received several notices over the years, this was the first time I had to report. I'm not going to lie, I was actually a little excited. Maybe I would serve on a jury. Maybe I would even be the foreperson. Maybe I would be responsible for sending

some serial killer to the electric chair or setting a wrongfully accused person free. I was flooded with images of passionate litigators strutting around the courtroom in their fine suits with their fancy jargon, "objection," and "move to strike!" Then, the twelve of us would adjourn to the deliberation room where I would, like a wise professor, skillfully convince the others to vote with me. Let me say this, if fantasy where more like actual life, people wouldn't play on the internet as much and Hollywood would be out of business.

I showed up and immediately understood why everyone who has ever had to report complains about it. We were herded into a room with about half as many chairs as were needed. Clearly the same person who came up with the number of lifeboats needed on the Titanic also calculated the number of chairs needed in the jury assembly room. Thank goodness I tend to be a bit early or I would have had to find myself a door to float on.

About twenty minutes after we

**GENERATION WHY**  
by **eryn b. nyre**



were required to report the court employee showed up to check us all in. I almost felt a little bad for the woman because suddenly she was descended upon like cats would descend on a helpless mouse. A few of us tried to form lines, but it was no use. The lack of posted instructions or guidelines made it worse, so nearly every person asked what part of the summons she needed

*You want to complain to your family? Fine. You want to complain to your co-workers? Go for it. But complaining about enduring the hassle that is jury duty loudly to a room of people also enduring the hassle that is jury duty is bad form.*

and what they had to do next. Picture this: a hoard of people swarming one tiny woman, asking the same question over and over, pushing, shoving, crowding. That whole process could have taken a quarter of the time had one person in the county thought,

"Hey, let's post a sign saying: Please present the court employee with the bottom portion of your jury summons and then take a seat, orientation will begin momentarily." Perhaps if they had marked off a dedicated section for all of us to line up, we could have been through that process and back on the rock hard, pains-in-the-rear they call chairs in a matter of minutes.

I think my least favorite thing about the whole experience was the complaining. You want to complain to your family? Fine. You want to complain to your co-workers? Go for it. But complaining about enduring the hassle that is jury duty loudly to a room of people also enduring the hassle that is jury duty is bad form. I wanted to smack them across the face with my rock hard chair. There were several who would sigh loudly every few minutes because of how slow the process was. Others would stare at their watches and remind the entire room that they are

Please see **JURY** on P. 13

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### FRAZIER cont. from P. 3

through the county budget in depth to see where it's coming in from, where it's going out to," Frazier said.

#### Water and Ground Water Recharge

Frazier said one of the main challenges was trying to balance county farming and residential water interests through the joint powers authority, along with managing the area's limited ground water during the unprecedented drought.

"We need to be sure we are doing the right things – for everyone. The farmers have mineral rights to their ground water as provided by the State of California. They have the right to farm here, but the multi-generational farmers are worried too, and [they] realize it's not sustainable and something needs to be done. A lot of the best management ideas are coming forward from the farming community now," Frazier said.

He also said he was very aware of the many residential wells going dry at 300 feet.

"I am on my own residential well and not a water system out here [in the Ranchos] so I know how scary it is to start to get sand from your well. But there has been no recharge," he said. Frazier pointed out that there hasn't been enough investment in ground water infrastructure to get the water storage that we need. "We have to bank the water in good years, so we have it for these bad years. We can't keep going on this roller coaster. We have to focus on water a whole lot more," Frazier said.

#### Funding of Public Safety

"We are understaffed and underserved in our sheriff's and fire departments right now," he said. "Going through the campaign I learned a lot and you become a little more frightened for the safety of your family when you realize [what can happen]. It might take a while, but fully funding the fire department and the sheriff's department is something I want to champion and focus on," Frazier said.

Hand in hand with public safety are growth and population issues. Frazier stressed that they need to be evaluated, planned for and properly managed to be a benefit to the county. "Madera County is one of the last [underdeveloped] areas in the state that has this kind of growth potential. We will continue to grow. We just have to be sure promises are kept, and we are doing it the right way, for the maximum benefit of the [city and county] areas. It's sure great to have people want to move and live here," he said.

Along with public safety and growth comes trash. The county debris and blight issues may also need to be addressed, according to Frazier. He said he had seen

some of the debris but had not had a chance to look into any code enforcement or other debris issues yet.

"But I like to live in a clean environment and in a nice looking area. I am hopeful that the coming mandatory trash pickup and recycling in residential subdivisions areas will help," he said.

Madera County roadways are also in need of funding and repair. "During the campaign I walked and drove my entire district once, sometimes twice. I am lucky I didn't have to replace the shocks on my car. There were some roads I would have rather driven on the shoulder. There has to be a priority focus on funding for road repair, so people can drive safely," he said.

#### High Speed Rail

"High speed rail has so many issues, it's hard to know where to start – and it runs right through my district," Frazier said. He believes it's largely been forced down our throats. "I voted to have it run through the city instead of our farm land. I don't agree with it, but it appears to be [Governor] Brown's legacy. As a local official the best thing I can do now is to be an advocate for our affected residents and negotiate so they are treated fairly and can be heard. The impacts will be huge, but my goal is minimize the negative impacts where possible and make it the best it can be now for our residents," Frazier said.

Expansion of the Madera Center Community College on Avenue 12 near Highway 99 is also under review and Frazier said he thought adding new trade skill classes to prepare local residents for good paying local jobs was essential and a priority. He also brought up that the County needs a new animal shelter facility, pointing out that the present building for the existing county animal shelter is badly out of date and too small. Frazier said it was built in the 1940s and was "repurposed" for animal containment in the 1950s and to call it "functional" is being kind.

"Animals have always been a priority for me. It's only been through the commendable efforts of the director, Kirsten Gross, and the volunteers – The Friends of the Animal Shelter – that has made it what it is today. The need for spay and neutering is increasing along with the number of animals. Every supervisor has acknowledged a new facility is needed and I hope to be able to champion that effort as well," he said. Then he added, "Budget permitting."

#### Optimistic About the Future

Frazier said his door as a supervisor will always be open. He is encouraging residents to speak up and be optimistic about the potential existing in Madera County and not dwell on the county being last on any lists.

Please see **FRAZIER** on P. 19

**1st Down & Delicious**

Happy 2015 – Hope it is a good one for you and your family.

Not long ago, I asked our sales rep Tina how old her oldest granddaughter was and when she said 9, I couldn't believe it. I was thinking she would say 6 or 7 because when Tina retired from the Ranchos Independent to take care of her new granddaughter I came out to help Randy. After being here a couple of years, I approached Randy about doing an article about cooking. He finally said ok. I wrote the first article for the January, 2009 paper. So this year I have been working here for 9 years, and this article will be the beginning of my seventh year. Gosh where has the time gone? It is so true, "How time flies when you are having fun." Thank you to all you faithful readers and looking forward to as many years as God allows.

Here we are into the Super Bowl again. Number XLIX (49), being played in the University of Phoenix Stadium in Glendale, Ariz. Did you know they have already set the next four bowls? Next year it will be played in the Levi's Stadium in San Francisco (it is actually in Santa Clara); number LI will be played in Reliant Stadium in Huston, Texas, and number LII in Minneapolis, Minn. and their brand new stadium won't be opened until 2016.

One of the requirements to be considered for a Super Bowl is to guarantee the stadium will seat 70,000. The stadium in Arizona only seats 69,400 but can be expanded to 72,000. The roof of their stadium can be closed in case of bad weather. Tickets are priced about as usual – from the cheapest at \$2,800 to the most expensive at over \$10,000 – depending on where the seat is.

Idina Menzel will be singing the National Anthem. Most recently, she was the voice for Elsa in the movie Frozen. Katy Perry will be doing the half time show with her special guest Lenny Kravitz. Should be inter-



esting.

Are you hosting a Super Bowl party, or going to one? As for the food, make it simple. This isn't Thanksgiving. My nephew Steve said they are going to have a party but he hasn't let us know what to bring, but I'm sure whatever we have to eat we will have a good time.

Chicken Wings have become the staple food on the Super Bowl menu, beating out pizza. The chicken industry estimates 1.25 billion (that's with a B) wings will be eaten this year. To put that in perspective, that is enough wings to circle the Grand Canyon 120 times. I found a recipe that is a lot easier to make and can be eaten without a knife and fork.



**Panko Chicken Strips**

- 5 T Butter
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- ¾ C Panko breadcrumbs
- ¼ C freshly shredded parmesan cheese
- 1 T finely chopped parsley (optional)

- Salt and pepper
- 1 ¼ to 1 ½ lbs. boneless, skinless chicken breast

Preheat oven to 400 and have ready a baking pan that has been sprayed with nonstick cooking spray.

In a small saucepan, over medium-low heat put in the butter. As the butter begins to melt, add the minced garlic to saucepan. Once butter has melted, remove from heat and pour the butter-garlic mixture into a shallow flat dish, such as a

Please see **RECIPE** on P. 9

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RECIPE cont. from P. 8

pie pan. In another low, flat dish, mix the panko, parmesan and parsley, if you're using it. Add salt and pepper to your taste. Cut chicken breasts into strips. Roll chicken strips in the garlic butter then completely dredge in the panko mixture and place on prepared baking pan. Bake in preheated oven for 15 to 20 minutes or until chicken is just cooked through. Serve with your favorite dipping sauce: Barbeque Sauce, Ranch Dressing or Blue Cheese.



### Jalapeño Bites

These are a lot like stuffed jalapeño peppers, but a lot easier to make.

1 (8 oz.) package cream cheese – softened.

8 oz. grated parmesan cheese

3 T chopped jalapeños. Depending on how hot you want them, you could remove the seeds first, but if you want them hot – go for it!

2 large egg yolks

2 C dry breadcrumbs

Preheat oven to 350.

Combine the cream cheese, parmesan cheese, peppers and egg yolks in a bowl and mix to form a paste. Shape a half tablespoon at a time into quarter inch rounds. Roll in the breadcrumbs. Place on an ungreased baking sheet and bake for 10 – 15 minutes or until golden brown. Best if served warm.

As I've told you before, I love potatoes cooked just about any way. And with this recipe, you not only get the potato skins, you get a bowl of mashed potatoes on the side.

### Potato Skins

6 medium baking potatoes

¾ C cheddar cheese, shredded

1/3 C butter

6 slices bacon, fried and chopped

1/3 C green onions, thinly sliced

Salt and pepper

Preheat oven to 375

Scrub potatoes well, dry and pierce with a fork several times. Arrange potatoes on a baking sheet and bake for about an hour or until tender. Let stand until cool enough to handle. Cut potatoes in half lengthwise and scoop out center, leaving 1/8" of potato in shell. Shells can be chilled for up to two days until ready to use.

When ready to prepare the skins, melt the 1/3 C butter. Brush the skins with the butter inside and out. Place cut side up on baking sheet. Bake in a 500 degree oven for 20 minutes or until brown and crisp. Divide the bacon, onions and cheese among each shell. Return to oven until cheese melts.

Into the bowl of potatoes that were scooped out of the skins, add 1/3 C milk and ¼ C butter, some salt and pepper and mix well for mashed potatoes.

Do you want something sweet? How about:

### Caramel Coated Popcorn

1 C. margarine

2 C. brown sugar

½ C. Karo syrup

1 tsp. salt

1 tsp. baking soda

1 tsp. vanilla

10 to 15 Cups popped popcorn

In a LARGE pot, heat the margarine, brown sugar, Karo syrup and salt over medium heat. While stirring, bring mixture to a boil and let it boil for five minutes.

Remove from heat. Stir in baking soda and vanilla. Be careful, it will flare up. Mix well. Pour over freshly popped popcorn. Stir until popcorn in well coated. If using microwave popcorn, be sure to remove the kernels that didn't pop. This recipe, as it is written makes a sticky, chewy caramel popcorn. If you like a crunchier popcorn, bake it in a 250 degree oven for an hour, stirring every 15 minutes.

There you have four recipes that are fairly easy and can be eaten with a paper plate and a napkin. No dishes to wash.

Whether you yell for Tom Brady and the rest of the New England Patriots or make a lot of noise for Russell Wilson and the Seattle Seahawks (for something they do -- or something they don't do) eat up and have fun!

**TRAFFIC** cont. from P. 2

travelers crossing California, so it is for traffickers," said Farinelli. "Many of these abused kids pass right through our community on their way to bigger markets. It's repulsive and heartbreaking, but there are things that we as a community can do to help these kids and it starts with knowing the signs."

**Here in America - and Madera**

While many trafficked children are from foreign countries, many American youth find themselves victims of trafficking or sexual exploitation. Runaway or homeless youth are particularly susceptible with one in three children being solicited for sex within 48 hours of running away or becoming homeless in the United States. "These runaways are our society's most vulnerable group," Farinelli said. The supervisor then made a point of surveying the group of attendees, noting the number of Madera County law enforcement and social services staff as well as community leaders from various churches, but then pointed out that an invitation had been extended to all Madera County principals and teachers as well; only one teacher was in attendance in a group of approximately 100 people.

Human trafficking is a hidden crime as victims rarely come forward to seek help because of language barriers, fear of the traffickers or fear of law enforcement. Victims may be in plain sight: teachers, nurses, social workers and faith-based leaders are members of communities that are likely to encounter, identify and help human trafficking victims. However, anyone may come across a victim and want to help. Learning the signs and indicators of human trafficking is the first step in helping the victim and in helping to keep our community safe.

As the meeting began, a very disturbing music video was played to a silent room. The professionally done video was filmed right here in Madera featuring familiar landmarks such as the Madera water tower. Gang members flashed weapons, gang signs, "colors," money, gold, cars, dogs and gang tattoos as dozens of gang members postured and sang about having it all if you're in their gang. Disturbingly this is one of many gang videos found on YouTube and is widely used to recruit gang members. This video alone has been viewed over 85,000 times. These gangs are a huge part of this industry. They know where runaways go and they conveniently hang out in the area or they have female associates approach frightened runaways to gain their trust. Once they've gained their trust they provide food and shelter and soon they're looking to be paid back.

One of the disturbing elements of

human trafficking is that gangs who would normally be mortal enemies have found that by working together with other gangs they can trade one runaway whose family may be aggressively looking for her to another out of town gang for another girl. This puts the runaway out of the area, harder to find and makes them even more vulnerable because they don't know anyone in their new surroundings. It is believed that sex trafficking is on the rise because gangs have recognized the high payout and low risk associated with exploiting children as compared to selling weapons or drugs. An exploiter may earn as much as \$650,000 in a year by sexually exploiting as few as four children, the Town Hall revealed.

What is Human Trafficking? Human Trafficking is smuggling, recruiting, abducting, transporting, harboring, buying or selling a person – inducing a minor – by means of force, fraud, fear, threats or coercion for the purpose of commercial or sexual exploitation, involuntary servitude, debt bondage or slavery. Some of the most commonly affected industries are exotic dancing, prostitution, massage parlors, domestic service workers, child care, restaurant workers, nail salons, magazine sales crews, drugs sales or cultivation, manufacturing work, home care or elder care, construction day laborers, hotel workers, maids, janitors, housekeepers, forced peddlers and agriculture or landscape workers. The most vulnerable are runaways or homeless youth; those with a prior history of sexual abuse; immigrants with undocumented status; often migrant workers; prior victims of domestic abuse; those with little to no education; children with a void in their lives – lack of love or affection or sense of belonging with their family; a need for safety or protection from abuse and a need for basics like food, clothing and shelter.

Startlingly, by far the most common risk factor for at risk children is contact with a social service agency such as Child Welfare or Probation. Between 60-75 percent of victims had contact with Child Welfare Services.

**Training for Sexual Exploitation**

An ex-foster youth and human trafficking survivor was quoted as saying, "Being in foster care was the perfect training for commercial sexual exploitation. I was used to being moved without warning, without any say, not knowing where I was going or whether I was allowed to pack my clothes. After years in foster care, I didn't think anyone would want to take care of me unless they were paid. So, when my pimp expected me to make money to support 'the family' it made sense to me."

Who are the traffickers and perpetrators?

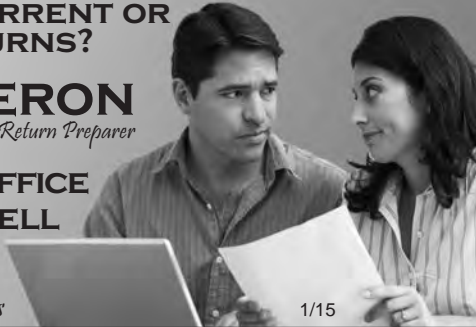
Please see **TRAFFIC** on P. 20

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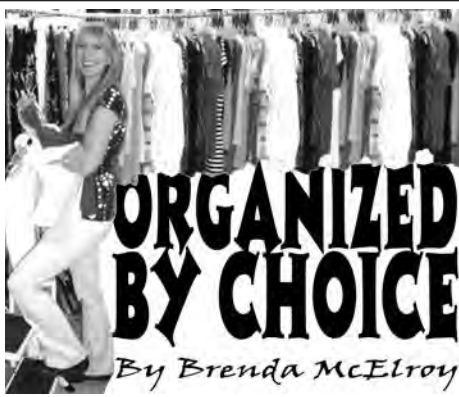
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*Two for One*

Everyone's pitching their strategy for how to have a successful New Year's resolution. This week I heard both "weigh yourself every day" and "throw

out the scale if you want to lose weight." So who's right? I'm leaning toward the daily weigh-in for the simple reason that you're not going to weigh yourself one day and find you've gained 15 pounds the next day! Routine checks help prevent being overwhelmed.

Just like weight loss has various elements that combine to bring success, so does organizing. In fact, I found several weight loss tips (some from www.health.com) that have similar organizing applications so today you get two for one. Here they are.

**Make mindful purchases when hungry.** Just like empty calories have negative consequences, so can mindless trips to the dollar store, or impulse buying while standing in line at the register. Make wise purchases, giving thought to how and when things will be used and where they'll be stored.

**Everything in moderation.** Don't believe the old adage "you can't have too much of a good thing." Whether it's food or magazines or shoes, having a moderate amount creates a healthier body and environment.

Fill a pretty glass pitcher with water and sliced cucumbers. **Just because something's good for you doesn't mean it has to be humdrum.** Filing is good for you and you can make it a little more fun with decorative folders, or a cute file holder or cabinet. Put on some music you love while accomplishing your filing task.

**Take a before photo.** Need some motivation to keep on task with your goal? Take a before photo of the space you're organizing and post it in the room or on the door.

**Cut out the drinks with calories.** Know your weaknesses and what gets you in trouble. Maybe

it's amazon.com, Target, or Joann's Fabric and Craft. Avoid your nemesis when possible or shop for only what's on a pre-determined list.

**Brush and floss right after dinner.** That action will influence what you put into your mouth the rest of the evening. When you make your bed first thing in the morning it sets a tidy tone for the rest of the day.

**Lose one pound 20 times.** Reduce being overwhelmed by your goal by setting and celebrating small goals. First organize the floor of your closet. Celebrate. Next, tackle the hanging clothes and then the shelves. Each victory will motivate you to the next step. You don't have to do it all in one day.

**Wear something tight.** It's not comfortable

Please see **ORGANIZED** on P. 16

# GET THE FACTS

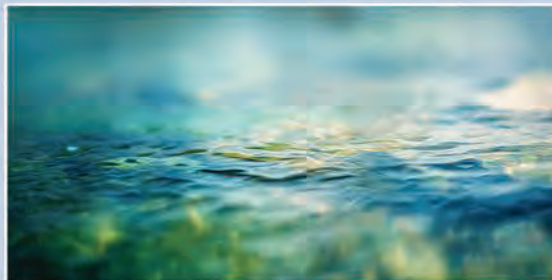
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**JURY** cont. from P. 6

missing a meeting or a doctor's appointment. And quite a few complained about having to pay for childcare for the day. They are very busy and important in their own universe and the rest of us couldn't possibly understand the inconvenience this has caused in their lives. Why doesn't the state of California know this? It took a lot of self-control, and a nice pair of noise cancelling earphones, to keep me from loudly reminding them that they are not the only people in the world with other responsibilities and priorities, and whining about it doesn't make them seem important, it makes them seem like a callous fool.

This whole process really could backfire in the grand scheme of the criminal justice system. I mean, let's make people really frustrated and angry, shove them into tight quarters to make them as uncomfortable as possible, and then have them decide the fate of a fellow human being. Probably not the best game plan, considering.

But in the end, as aggravating as it can be, as much of an inconvenience as it is to our daily routines, it really is an important part of the process and at some point, most people have to endure it. Having said that, I have to go back tomorrow, we'll see how my outlook changes after another day of the dreaded four-letter word.



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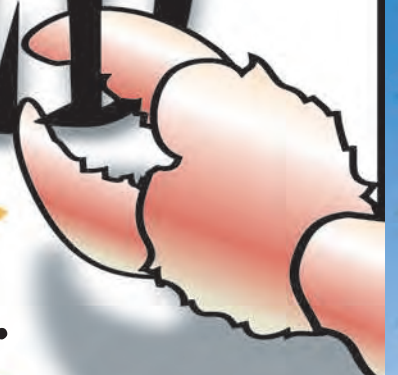


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## Call the Chamber for more information. 645-4001

### A Big "Thank You"

I would like to thank all who attended the tree lighting and donated items and money for the veterans. We made up 100 gift bags for delivery to the hospital. It was greatly appreciated.

Special thanks go to Katie Harr, Ollie Ridge, Patty Groh, Moriah Vick, Station 19, Explorer Scouts, Paula Stuart and Audra and Dan Damore for the Santa pictures. A big thanks to Santa who arrived from the North Pole and anyone else I may have forgotten.

*Virginia Vick, President*

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### February Chamber Mixer

The next Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce Mixer will be on Wednesday, Feb. 4 at 6 p.m. This month's mixer is being sponsored by:

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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 #5C. Call us at 645-4001.

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LETTERS cont. from P. 4

blame. Based on his statements and heated discussion with Trustee Mike Kelly at the most recent School Board meeting, it is obvious Mosley also has the superintendent in his crosshairs.

The district has been operating at a deficit for years. In the last school year the district spent \$3 million more than it received. The reason for this is the State of California has been giving the school district "IOUs." The state calls these deferrals. The district has been receiving only about 80 percent of its revenue limit. If the union COLA raises had not also been deferred, the deficit would have been much larger as labor costs were 83 percent of the district's budget. It was the foresight of previous boards and administrations to build a rainy day reserve (which angered the unions) and give the district the flexibility to draw down that rainy day reserve in financial short years. The insight of previous GVUSD boards and management saved the district from fiscal mismanagement by the state. By the way, Trustee Mosley opposes the district's rainy day reserve. It is his opinion all money coming into the district should be spent each year and thereby stimulate the economy.

At the last School Board meeting, the independent auditor presented his findings of his current audit. He praised the district for its fiscal management. The district received the highest evaluation possible. To my recollection that has only happened once before; last year. It is my opinion, Trustee Mosely and President Crumpton's fiscal financial policies are reckless and irresponsible. They will lead the district back to 2010. We will return to the days of district layoffs, increased teacher-to-student ratios, decreased course offerings, fewer electives and educational programs, and delay Career Vocational Technology.

Revenue to the district is ALWAYS subject to deferral or change. If there is no rainy day reserve to counterbalance that potential shortfall, the budget will be unstable. Our history has shown a rainy day reserve is good policy. If we adopt the new liberal financial policies, the budget will fluctuate and we will go from financial crisis to financial stability back to financial crisis. The district's financial future is not a mystery under the new management. The budgets of the United States and California are managed in the manner Trustee Mosley and President Crumpton desire to manage the district's budget. If you like the financial policies and management of the United States and the State of California governments, you will love the fiscal direction of the new majority board of directors of the GVUSD.

Please help me stop the reckless and irresponsible direction of the new school board majority coalition. Please attend GVUSD Board Meetings and make your opinions known. Please take time to investigate this matter.

I can be contacted by email at

Please see LETTERS on P. 18

ORGANIZED cont. from P. 12

until we've reduced to what will fit. Set some boundaries for your stuff (mugs, office supplies, DVDs, purses, whatever) and then reduce what you have until it fits comfortably in that space.

**Weigh in daily.** Like I said, no one gains 15 pounds in a day. Routine checking in on our weight and rooms can be the key to not becoming paralyzed by an overwhelming task. Do a quick walk-through your home before going to bed and put away items that were left out.

**Plan to fail.** I've only seen The Biggest Loser a few times, but the contestants I've seen always experience a setback at some point. Planning to fail isn't being pessimistic, it's a way to prepare so you're not caught off-guard when it happens. Whether you fall off the wagon with your diet and exercise, or your organizing goals, by deciding ahead of time what you're going to do when that happens, you'll be one step closer to getting back on.

Wishing you a healthy and organized New Year!

Contact Brenda McElroy at Organized by Choice (because things don't always fall into place) at P.O. Box 26152, Fresno, CA 93729, 559-871-3314, or email at info@organizedbychoice.com. www.organizedbychoice.com is her website.

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# Ranchos Groundwater Solutions

By Adam Lee

Unless you live under a rock, you know that the Madera Ranchos' groundwater has major problems. Foremost is the decline of the groundwater table level each year where the water table becomes lower and lower, causing homeowners and farmers to lower the pumps of their wells. The well is still likely to continue to go dry despite this method, requiring users to dig a new and deeper well that is still likely to go dry in the future despite the huge expense. Users in the Madera Ranchos area are also starting to run into water quality issues as wells within MD-10A have discontinued pumping due to nitrates and coliform in the water samples (both elements are likely to be sampled due to the high concentration of septic tanks in the area). Let's address these problems in further detail.

**Groundwater Recharge** – The groundwater aquifer (layers of sand and clay) that store all of the water we use has three methods of receiving/recharging by new water. First, rainfall occurs directly over the greater Ranchos area. Water from this rainfall soaks into the ground and the amount to refill the aquifer is dependent on the amount of rainfall each year. Unfortunately, we have not had much rainfall in recent years.

Secondly, we receive a large amount of groundwater directly from the San Joaquin River. As the river flows south to Highway 41 and then west to Highway 99, a portion of the surface water in the river sinks through the ground and provides a source of recharge for both Madera and Fresno County. This source stays pretty consistent from year to year due to the continual water flow through the river channel, but the water level of the river continues to drop.

Third is groundwater that flows through fractured rock cracks underground with water flowing from the foothills north of Highway 145. This too is dependent on yearly rainfall totals.

All three recharge methods total the amount of water deposited into our groundwater aquifer ("bank"). When we pump and use less water than deposited, the groundwater level is able to rise and increase the total amount available. When we pump more than is deposited each year, we "overdraft" and lower the water table each year. Unfortunately the current situation is the latter as we have been using more water than we deposit each year for about the past 30 years or so.

**Water Quality** – Water quality is our other

main problem. Above 600 feet below ground, all water available for use is of fairly good quality and is available due to the recharge methods already described. Below 600 feet, that water transitions into what is known as "connate water" which is a very old deposit of water that has sat stagnantly in the ground for a very extended period of time. As the water sits, minerals and salts from the soils around it tend to lead to various levels of arsenic, iron, manganese, salts and other constituents that are not healthy for human consumption as set by the California Department of Health Services. When the level gets too high that water well will either has to be shut off or the water is treated at an additional expense.

**Solutions to the Problem** – The current situation leaves us with the question of what we can accomplish for the future. Obviously using less water and/or recharging more water needs to take place and a comprehensive solution is highly likely to involve both. The Governor of California has recently signed

*Our water problems will continue to get worse before they get better, but we are in a good location ... we should be able to find a successful long-term solution.*

legislation mandating that groundwater be used sustainably. What this means for the Ranchos is that by 2017, Madera County must create a local agency to deal with groundwater use with an overall plan being developed by 2020.

After 2020 the County must start correcting the overdraft problem, with report updates provided to the state every five years. The methods implemented will probably come in the form of less use (restrictions applied to both farmers and homes) and increased supplies within the area of the Ranchos. Since the ground has not settled similarly to western Madera County, our groundwater can more easily be recharged to refill the water level in the sandy layers. New water supply in the Ranchos will most likely be surface water delivered through the Madera Irrigation District canal that is placed into large ponds over sandy soil in order for the water to sink back into the ground to charge the aquifer. The addition of water quality issues in the Canal water may also require treatment before drinking, similar to what is currently being considered by many small communities to the south of Fresno.

While we should have been working on solutions to correct these issues many years ago, the state is now going to require action to be taken in our area. Our water problems will continue to get worse before they get better, but we are in a good location with several sources of existing groundwater recharge and the ability to add surface water supplies that we should be able to find a successful long-term solution.

LETTERS cont. from P. 16

complete\_car\_care@hotmail.com. Board meetings are held the first and third Tuesdays of the month at 6:30 p.m. in the Liberty High School Library. You can also go to the district website to contact our district trustees or write a "Letter to the Editor" and ask your trustee for an "On the Record" public response.

Thank You ,

Warren Parr  
Madera Ranchos

*This is a copy of a letter sent to the Madera Ranchos Water System Committee's website, www.RanchosWater.org. Its author has forwarded it here as a letter to the editor.*

Editor

Dear Editor:

Who authorized the current website controllers for the Madera Ranchos Water System Committee (MRWSC) to censor comments about incorrect and untrue statements presented on this public website for MD-10A? The MRWSC website contains inaccurate and dishonest information regarding the history of MD-10A and the placement of this committee. I logged into your website and gave up my information and email address to post a comment on this website. I posted a comment challenging the veracity of two statements on the website following the proper procedures. My challenge to this inaccurate and misleading information was answered by deleting my legitimate questions and deleting my account with this website. The inaccurate and untruthful information remains on this website. Since the MD-10A bylaws and this website and this inaccurate and untruthful information was created prior to Jan. 6, 2015 when Brett Frazier was sworn in as our elected supervisor and representative, why do the people managing this website insist on disparaging Mr. Frazier's credibility right from the beginning with these inaccurate and untrue statements including his name?

This website is allegedly to inform and educate the almost 1,000 rate payers of MD-10A. Why the censoring and blackballing? I cannot find anything in the bylaws for MD-10A that authorizes any individual to censor or blackball legitimate questions concerning MD-10A. Please tell me where the required form or procedure is for you people to be required to be accountable for your actions. How does this situation get on the agenda for the next month's meeting so this censoring and blackballing activity can be addressed and resolved at that meeting?

A new committee is not just the old committee running things in the way that favors them. A new committee is supposed to be responsive and accountable to the 980 rate payers of MD-10A, not continue an agenda that they have en-

joyed for the last five years. A new committee with four of seven members from the old, coddled group that were indulged by former District 1 supervisors needs to make a change in their attitude and performance if indeed this is to be a new committee that will inform and educate and represent the 980 rate payers of MD-10A, unlike the previous five years of no information and no accountability to those other 970 rate payers that want and deserve proper representation.

Address this issue now or provide the means for this to be on the agenda next month – or explain why censoring and blackballing is acceptable. I ask that you provide at the next meeting in a month the official documentation to substantiate your claims as posted on the official website of MRWSC. I will have in my possession the existing official Madera County papers that challenge your two items that are inaccurate and untruthful. I ask that you remember that this is America, land of the free and the brave where truth and justice prevail; not censoring and blackballing those that challenge your misinformation.

Your turn.

Chuck LaRue  
Madera Ranchos

*The Ranchos Independent welcomes your letters. Whether you're a fan or someone looking for something to line the birdcage, we want to hear from you. The only rules? Sign it, be civil or forget about it.*

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In order to register your child, you will need the following:

1. Your child must be 5 by Sept. 1, 2015. You will need to bring in his/her birth certificate to verify this.
2. Your child's immunization record showing that your child is up-to-date on all of his or her shots.
  - A. TB Test (A GVUSD Requirement)
  - B. Polio (4)
  - C. Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis (5)
  - D. Measles, Mumps, Rubella (2)
  - E. Hepatitis B (3)
  - F. Varicella (Chicken Pox) (1)
3. Proof of residency within the Golden Valley Unified School District boundaries.
  - A. This can be a utility bill, tax records, rental agreement, etc.
  - 4. A completed registration packet.

**Webster Elementary – 645-1322**  
**Sierra View Elementary – 645-1122**

Registration packets can be picked up at either office beginning Feb. 3 and questions can be answered.

### KIDNAP cont. from P. 2

napping in Oakhurst at about 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, Jan. 22 by two men who attempted to kidnap a teenage girl along Highway 41 near the High Sierra RV & Mobile Park in Oakhurst. The girl said she had stopped to take pictures of the sunset when two men rushed her from a nearby area where they had been hiding. One suspect grabbed the girl by the arm and lifted her off the ground while stating that they intended to kidnap her. The girl was able to kick the suspect several times and aggressively resisted his attempt to overpower her. She was ultimately able to break free from his grasp and then fled to her home. Her father immediately called the Sheriff's Office upon hearing what had occurred.

The teenage victim described the two suspects as white males dressed in all black clothing. The suspect who grabbed her is at least six feet tall with a heavy muscular build, brown eyes and at the time of the attack had a Mohawk style haircut. The other male was also about six feet tall with a smaller build.

Sheriff's Detectives have interviewed a number of witnesses as well as several persons of interest. Additional follow up investigation is currently underway.


"I commend the victim in this case for her resolve and courage in preventing herself from being taken," said Sheriff Jay Varney. "We are continuing to follow up on this case and the earlier case from the Madera Ranchos area, and whether they are related."

### FRAZIER cont. from P. 7

"I don't think it's the Board of Supervisors that are responsible for that. There is a collective self-esteem issue here and we act accordingly. We don't ask for things. You have to advocate for your county and yourself. Don't worry about what is happening in Fresno or Merced Counties. Let's take the chip off our shoulder and ask what are we doing better? Take a positive approach. Stay tuned, give it some time. I think we have some exciting

things ahead. We have great people and we need to build on that and work together to make this area what it should be," Frazier said.

Frazier is a graduate of Madera High School and a 2002 graduate of the University of California, Santa Barbara. He has worked in commercial real estate and insurance before returning to Madera and joining the family business. He currently owns and operates four Papa Murphy Pizza outlets. District 1 Supervisor Brett Frazier can be reached at his office at 662-6010.



## DRILLING AND PUMP SERVICE

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**TRAFFIC** cont. from P. 10

tors? Gone are the days of a pimp in flashy clothes on a dimly lit street in a bad part of town. Although local gangs, organized crime, smugglers, pimps and madams are sometimes involved, it can just as easily be employers, friends, family, husbands, boyfriends or basically anyone. With smart phone technology available today anyone who can reach a child via text, cell phone or email has constant and direct access to tell a child where to go and who to see to make money. There have been a number of programs designed around this industry however as soon as a program is discovered it's quickly replaced with another. C. Leanne Kozub of the Guilds Child Abuse Prevention & Treatment Center at Valley Children's Hospital advises all parents of children, "Never be afraid to check your child's phone to see who they're talking to and what programs they've downloaded. If you pay the phone bill then it's your phone to check anytime you wish."

**Red Flags**

There are "red flags" to help identify trafficking victims. Many trafficking victims are branded or tattooed with their trafficker's names, initials or barcodes, or have "royalty" tattoos with their trafficker's street name. These tattoos are often found on the back of the neck or the inside of their bottom lip. In addition, they often live, sleep and work in collective living quarters where someone else speaks for them when they should be able to answer themselves. Victims are often locked in rather than locking others out. They normally don't have any documents in their possession, such as a driver's license, ID, green card, etc. A common factor is fear of police or immigration agents and their movements are greatly restricted; they may not be able to access phones or computers or have their contact monitored. There is usually signs of physical abuse or fear, inhumane living conditions, guards and weapons nearby and great debts with a total lack of access to any of their earnings.

By identifying victims and reporting tips, law enforcement is greatly helped in the rescue of victims and lives can be saved. Disturbingly the life expectancy from the first day that a victim is exploited is just seven years with the leading cause of death for trafficking victims being HIV/Aids or homicide.

Law enforcement warns against attempting to confront a suspected trafficker directly or alert a victim to any suspicions. It is up to law enforcement to investigate suspected cases and the suspected trafficker is often close by and there will need to be a team effort to keep the victim from going back to them. The trauma caused by the traffickers can be so great that many may not

identify themselves as victims or ask for help, even in highly public settings. Traffickers often have group homes staked out and have been known to send others into a group situation to convince a girl to come back to them. For this reason many times victims are sent to group homes out of the area.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security is the agency responsible for investigating human trafficking, however they work closely with other law enforcement agencies as well as the FBI and the U.S. Attorney's office. There are federal RICO (Organized Crime) charges that can be filed that carry much longer mandatory sentences when these agencies are involved in cases. There are currently nine human trafficking task forces in California. More than 1,200 human trafficking victims were identified by the nine task forces in California between 2010 and 2012. Approximately 72 percent of the rescued victims were from the U.S.

"Any problem addressed early has the best chance for success," said Supervisor Farinelli. "We as a community need to do all we can to help our kids. They've never been in more danger, but at least now the tools are becoming available to do something about it."

With this comes addressing issues at home that lead children to be more easily victimized. It starts with addressing the broken homes that enable it. Federal statistics show that 90 percent of all homeless and runaway children come from fatherless homes and children from these broken homes are 32 times more likely to run away than those from a home with both a father and mother in the household. Fatherlessness is a growing national problem with 24.6 million children living absent their biological father. Former Congressman George Radanovich, a long-time family advocate in California, has a plan for how he feels community groups can act together to respond to this root issue that puts many children and their futures in danger, including not only exploitation but gang recruitment and drug abuse. Under his plan called "Restore California - Madera" he offers these statistics: Children in father-absent homes are two to three times more likely to be victims of child and sexual abuse, do drugs, experience educational, health, emotional and behavior problems, become teen parents and engage in criminal behavior. In addition, children in father-absent homes are twice as likely to end up in jail. Sixty-three percent of youth who commit suicide come from father-absent homes. Seventy-one percent of high school dropouts come from father-absent homes. Nearly 75 percent of children raised in homes without fathers will experience poverty before the age of 11. Today, over 40 percent of American children will go to

sleep tonight with only one parent in the home.

**Restore California - Madera**

The vision for Restore California Madera is to see a future where all biological and adoptive parents are equipped with the determination and skills necessary to provide a stable foundation under every child in California, specifically Madera County. Through donor education, public awareness and collaboration, the organization seeks to utilize the \$38 million donated to religious and non-profit organizations by the citizens of Madera every year to reduce fatherlessness, unwed pregnancy and divorce by 30 percent in Madera County. They plan to accomplish this over a 10-year period by a cross sector collaboration of business, religious, non-profits, schools and law enforcement, thereby dramatically increasing their collective influence in building California families.

Under Radanovich's plan he defines family as being one or more children and their biological or adoptive parents and stresses adoption rather than fostering. To achieve this objective, Radanovich is calling on businesses to lead the effort by adopting a culture of marriage in their businesses and prioritizing giving to non-profits that prove their ability to lower rates of fatherlessness, unwed pregnancy and divorce. He also says there is a need to prioritize political giving to elected officials who support the goals of Restore California/Madera. Radanovich says it's also necessary to become an advocate of economic benefits and government savings achieved by reducing fatherlessness, unwed pregnancy and divorce nationwide.

He is also calling upon religious leaders and organizations to raise the standard for healthy families in every house of worship by preparing, nourishing, strengthening and restoring marriages within their parish and community. He stresses supporting the adoption of a Community Marriage Policy (CommunityMarriagePolicy.org) in every house of worship in the community and asks faith-based organizations to help identify fatherless children within their community and seek out resources for that family. Additionally, Radanovich is asking religious organizations to join a movement to empty the foster care system in Madera County by giving parents the support needed to raise their own children or by encouraging adoption.

Radanovich is looking to non-profits to identify and recommend full funding for all programs committed to the reduction of fatherlessness, unwed pregnancy and divorce. He's asking non-profits to reassess the mission of their organizations to determine how they can reduce fatherlessness, unwed pregnancy and divorce by 30 percent in 10

years, using the goals of Restore California to measure the success of their mission, and help increase public awareness of the goals of Restoring California to 80 percent within the community.

Radanovich sees schools as having the ability to establish voluntary character education in grades 3-12 supported by school authorities and augmented with private sector funding. To develop the student's self-image, self-respect and self-direction, the student must experience a sense of attachment to the program and must be personally validated as a result of membership. Adult personnel must be trained to implement the program and must offer parent training to engage the parents in the program.

Finally, Radanovich sees law enforcement as the eyes and ears for the community to identify the needs in the community. He calls for the full funding of all police Chaplain Programs so that all domestic calls received by local law enforcement authorities are followed up with a knock on the door by a Chaplain.

"Free cultures build strong institutions," said Radanovich, who is looking for a core group of business, religious, non-profits, schools and law enforcement to champion this cause for Madera County. He said it will be a commitment for up to six months to develop a plan to implement Restore Madera and will require \$5,000 to start the first phase. For more information, or to contact Radanovich, go to [www.RestoreCalifornia123.com](http://www.RestoreCalifornia123.com).

**Local Resources**

There are a number of local resources available for victims including Valley Children's Hospital's Child Advocacy Clinic Comprehensive Medical Care which provides medical examinations and testing as well as follow-up care. They are available around the clock, 365 days per year.

Community Action Partnership of Madera County provides rape and sexual assault counseling and services, and has advocates available to accompany the victim through the process of preparing a victim impact statement, obtaining a restraining order and help to navigate the criminal justice system. They can be reached at 800-355-8989 or on the internet at [www.maderacap.org](http://www.maderacap.org)

For more information or requests for training on human trafficking and commercial sexually exploited children topics please contact C. Leanne Kozub at 559-353-5317, or she can be emailed at [ckozub@childrenscentralcal.org](mailto:ckozub@childrenscentralcal.org). You can also contact Robin Leppo Kerr at 559-232-9753, or email her at [rleppo@mccapc.com](mailto:rleppo@mccapc.com).

If you think you know or see a victim, the one number to remember is 1-888-373-7888 to alert law enforcement.

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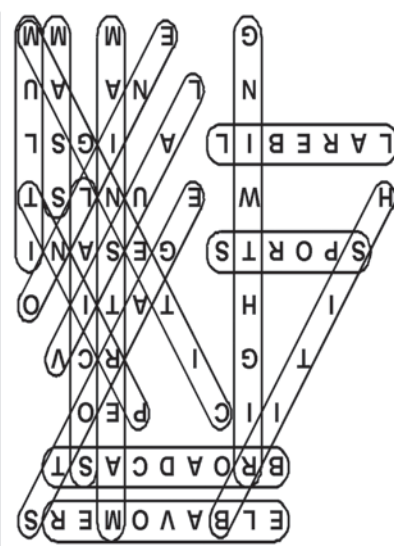
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**top ten**

1. Carrots
2. Oysters
3. Liver
4. Fish
5. Nuts
6. Seeds
7. Vegetables
8. Orange juice
9. Eggs
10. Spinach

**Foods For Healthy Eyes**

Source: American Optometric Association

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## SCRAMBLERS

solution

1. Stigma; 2. Chore;
3. Noble; 4. Leash

Today's Word

**CHEAT**

## SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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

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

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## GO FIGURE! by Linda Thistle

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.

	-		×		7
+		+		-	
	+		-		7
÷		÷		×	
	÷		+		6
1		3		8	

1 2 3 4 4 5 6 7 8

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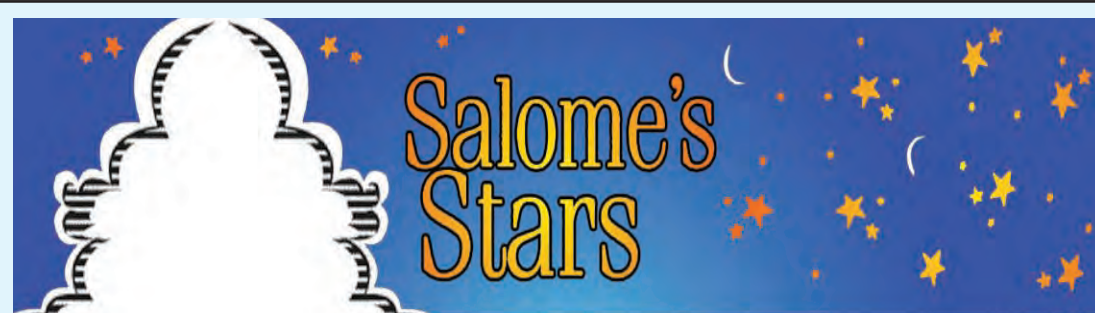
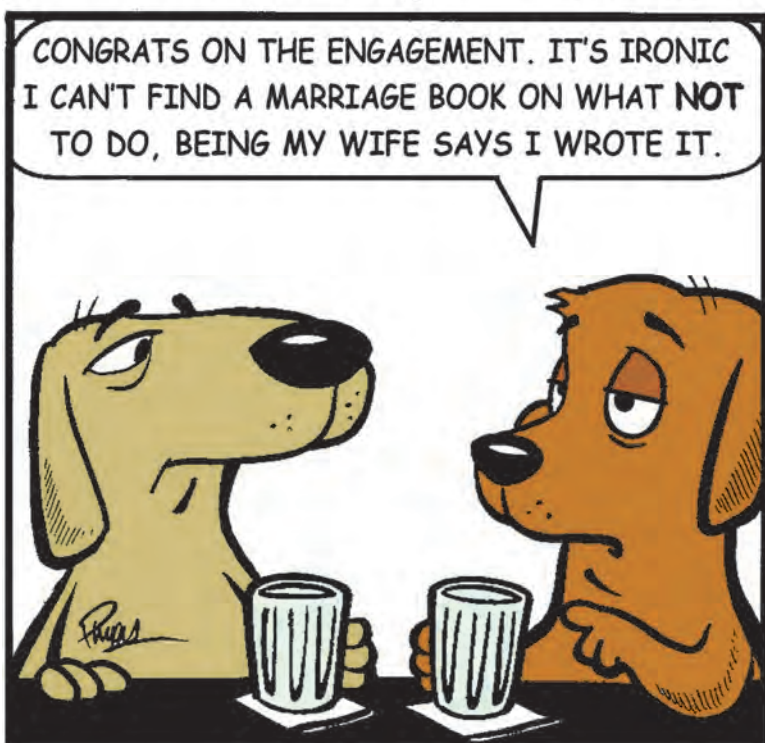
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### Just Like Cats & Dogs by Dave T. Phipps



**ARIES** (March 21 to April 19) That lower-than-acceptable performance you're getting from others in your group might be the result of miscommunication. If so, correct it before serious problems arise later on.

**TAURUS** (April 20 to May 20) An unexpected situation could call for a change of plans. If so, you might feel that this is unfair. But it's best to make the needed adjustments now. There'll be time later for rescheduling.

**GEMINI** (May 21 to June 20) The new year brings opportunities you might want to look into. Some might be more interesting than others. But take time to look at all of them before you make any decisions.

**CANCER** (June 21 to July 22) It's a good idea to be careful about expenses until you've worked out that pesky financial problem. You might find it advisable to get some solid advice on how to proceed.

**LEO** (July 23 to August 22) Romance looms large over the Leonine aspect. Single Lions looking for love should find Cupid very cooperative. Paired Cats can expect a renewed closeness in their relationships.

**VIRGO** (August 23 to September 22) Making contact with a former colleague might not be high on your list of priorities. But it could pay off personally as well as professionally. Avoid bringing up any negatives about the past.

**LIBRA** (September 23 to October 22) A personal relationship could face added stress because of a situation involving someone close to both of you. Be supportive and, above all, try to avoid playing the blame game.

**SCORPIO** (October 23 to November 21) You might well find some lingering uncertainties about a decision. If so, take that as a warning that you might not be ready to make that move yet. More study would be in order.

**SAGITTARIUS** (November 22 to December 21) Music is a dominant theme for Sagittarians right now, and it should remind you to make a greater effort to restore some much-needed harmony in that very special relationship.

**CAPRICORN** (December 22 to January 19) Although family matters might demand much of the Sea Goat's attention this week, you'll want to try to make time to handle those all-important workplace situations as well.

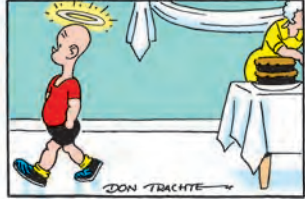
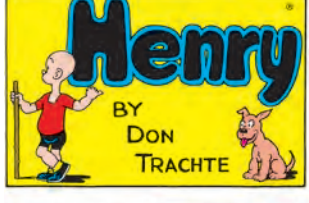
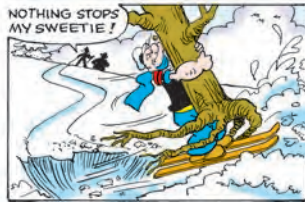
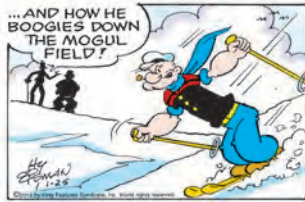
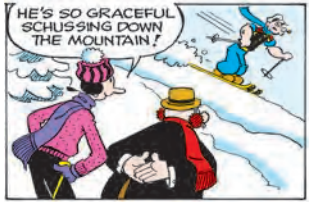
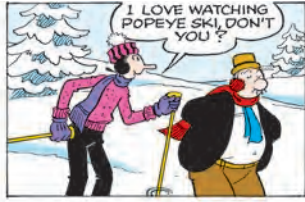
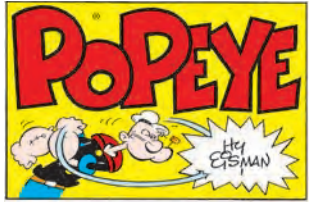
**AQUARIUS** (January 20 to February 18) A recurring unresolved issue might need to be revisited before you can move forward. Consider asking someone familiar with the situation to act as an impartial counselor.

**PISCES** (February 19 to March 20) Ignore pressure to make a decision. Keeping your options open is still the wisest course, at least until you're sure you've learned all you need to know about the matter at hand.

**Born this Week**  
 You're capable of great loyalty to those around you, which is one reason you can count on devotion from friends and family.

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# FUN PAGES



## THEY'LL DO IT EVERY TIME

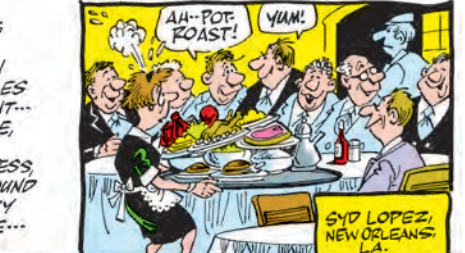
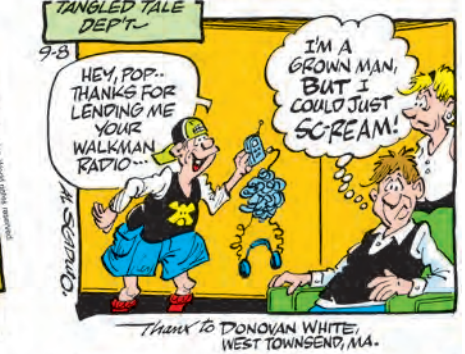
WE ALL KNOW A GUY LIKE THIS...THE VOICE OF DOOM...



IN THIS SECTION OF THE BISTRO WITH TABLES SEATING TWO... THE WAITRESS IS AN AMAZON, 250-POUND FLOTILLA SHE...



## BY AL SCADUTO



## Junior Whirl

by Hal Kaufman

**NOTICE**  
HERESTO PANDS PEN D ASOCI  
AL HOU R INHAR M LES SMIRT  
HA ND FUNLET FRIENDS  
HIPRE IGN BE JUSTAN DK  
INDA NDEVIL SP EAKOF NONE

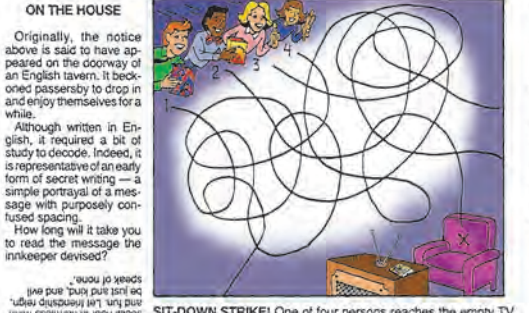
Even Tied! Four even numbers — 2, 4, 12 and 14 — appear in the diagram at right. You are invited to insert four more even numbers — 6, 8, 10 and 16 — in blank spaces so that three numbers on each of the four sides total exactly 28. Hint: Discover the number that belongs in the top left corner and you've just about solved the problem.

Please 15 sit at top left (the only place from which you can see the picture) and enjoy yourselves for a while.

Although written in English, it required a bit of study to decode. Indeed, it is representative of an early form of secret writing — a simple portrayal of a message with purposely confused spacing.

How long will it take you to read the message the inkeeper devised?

**SIT-DOWN STRIKE!** One of four persons reaches the empty TV chair above. Which one is for you to decide.



## Wishing Well

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

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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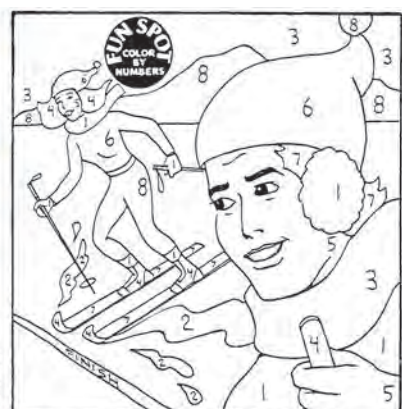
## MAGIC MAZE — MEDIA

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

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

British	Mainstream	Print	Sports
Broadcast	Mass	Removable	Storage
Liberal	Multi	Right-wing	Visual
Magnetic	Online	Social	

1. One, the state of Washington  
2. Honshu  
3. Tax evasion  
4. "The Princess Bride"  
5. Dancing  
6. "Hee Haw"  
7. Carolus Linnaeus  
8. Charles L. Dodgson  
9. Type of grape  
10. From the beginning



TEST RUN! It's warm-up time for the ski team. Add these colors to the scene: 1—Red, 2—Lt. blue, 3—Yellow, 4—Lt. brown, 5—Flesh tones, 6—Green, 7—Dk. brown, 8—Purple.

**SPELLBINDER**

SCORE 10 points for using all the letters in the word below to form two complete words.

T A C I T U R N

THEN score 2 points each for all words of four letters or more found among the letters.

Try to score at least 50 points.

## TRIVIA TEST

By Fifi Rodriguez

- U.S. PRESIDENTS: How many U.S. states are named after a president?
- GEOGRAPHY: Which Japanese island is the home of Mount Fuji?
- FAMOUS PEOPLE: What was gangster Al Capone convicted of, sending him to prison for 11 years?
- MOVIES: What 1980s movie featured the lines, "My name is Inigo Montoya. You killed my father. Prepare to die."?
- PSYCHOLOGY: What would someone who suffered from chorophobia be afraid of?
- TELEVISION: Which long-running country variety show featured a radio station named KORN?
- SCIENCE: Who is known as the "father of taxonomy," a system of naming, ranking and classifying organisms?
- LITERATURE: Who wrote under the pseudonym of Lewis Carroll?
- FOOD & DRINK: What is a scuppernong?
- MUSIC: What does the musical notation "da capo" mean?

**Answers**

- One, the state of Washington
- Honshu
- Tax evasion
- "The Princess Bride"
- Dancing
- "Hee Haw"
- Carolus Linnaeus
- Charles L. Dodgson
- Type of grape
- From the beginning

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Click on "Local News" at

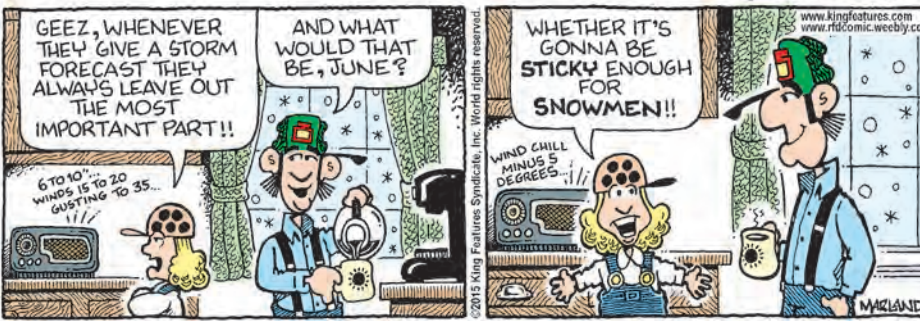
# Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps



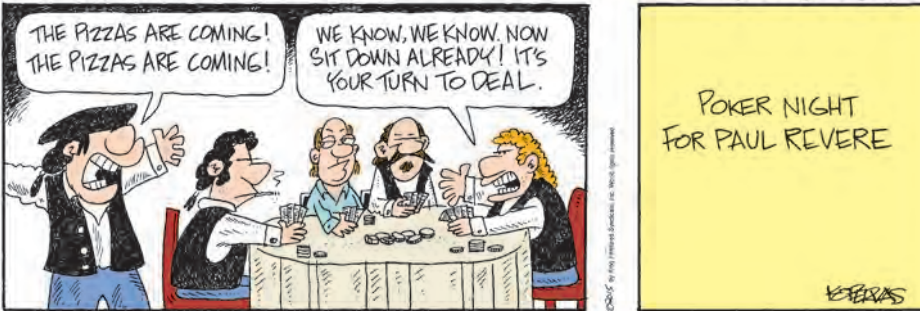
# R.F.D.

by Mike Marland



# Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas



# The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



# SCRAMBLERS

Unscramble the letters within each rectangle to form four ordinary words. Then rearrange the boxed letters to form the mystery word, which will complete the gag!

Shame **GAMITS**

Duty **ROCHE**

Elite **BLONE**

Tether **SHALE**

"Tough luck! This calculator adds, subtracts and multiplies, but it doesn't"

**TODAY'S WORD**

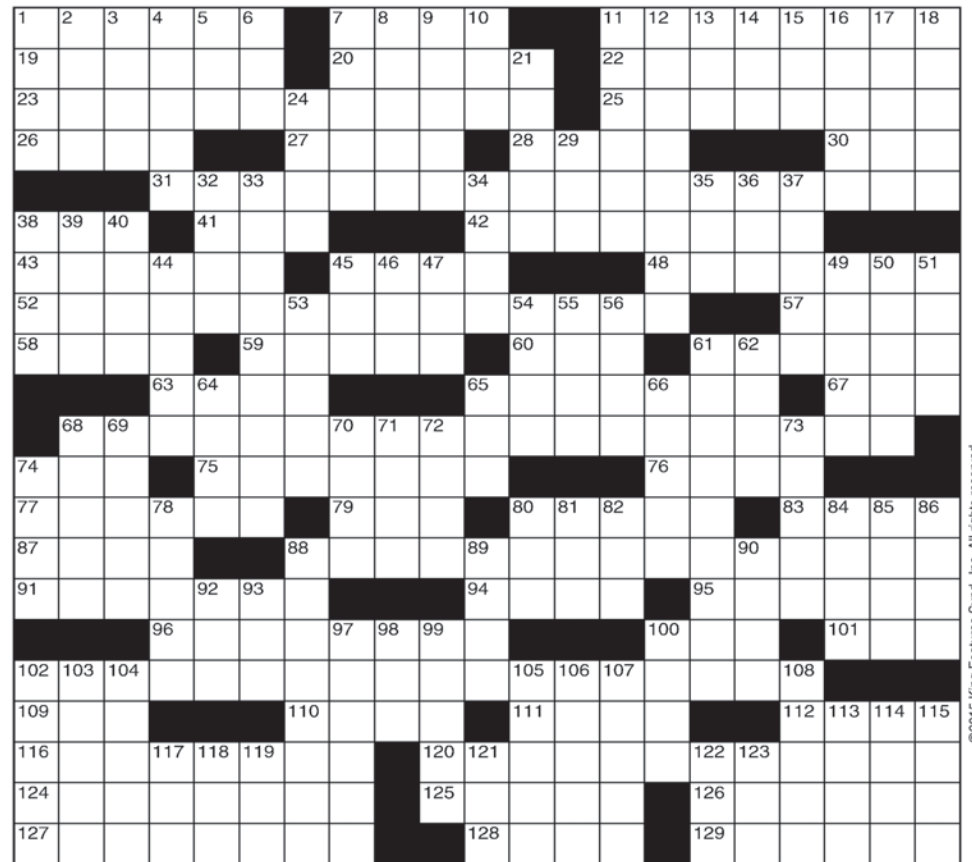
# HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels. Differences: 1. Sign is missing. 2. Dog's ear is shorter. 3. Mitten is removed. 4. Sun is missing. 5. Book is missing. 6. Cap is missing.

# Super Crossword



- ACROSS**
- 1 Approach intrusively
  - 7 Lamenter's sound
  - 11 Process of going bad
  - 19 Attach with heat, as a patch
  - 20 Heart sections
  - 22 When shows are broadcast
  - 23 Butler or maid
  - 25 Fish also called a largemouth
  - 26 Mop
  - 27 At that point
  - 28 CNN anchor Burnett
  - 30 China's Mao —tung
  - 31 1960s reform movement in China
  - 38 "Sid the Science Kid" network
  - 41 Tracker maker,
  - 42 Convert to the Koran's religion
  - 43 Chevy model
  - 45 Suffix with towel
  - 48 Korean, Thai or Chinese
  - 52 Precipitating heavily
  - 57 Big Apple sch.
  - 58 Off-white
  - 59 March composer John Philip
  - 60 Cease
  - 61 Lives (in)
  - 63 It lures fish
  - 65 Loss of memory
  - 67 Posed (for)
  - 68 "Stop thinking of me as so naive"
  - 74 "— recall ..."
  - 75 Headlined
  - 76 Dying words from Caesar
  - 77 Inflicts upon
  - 79 Honshu sash
  - 80 Small piece
  - 83 Ad biz prize
  - 87 Collaborator
  - 88 Person in the third decade of life
  - 91 Frantic scramble
  - 94 Correct copy
  - 95 Hitchcock classic
  - 96 Light blue avenue in Monopoly
  - 100 Neat — pin
  - 101 Announcer Hall
  - 102 American flier with scarlet
  - 109 Special time
  - 110 Tabula —
  - 111 Postal letters
  - 112 Get in return
  - 116 Person petting
  - 120 What the last words of 23-, 31-, 52-, 68-, 88- and 102-
  - 124 Across are
  - 125 Unusual
  - 125 1983
  - 126 Holy rings
  - 127 Property of a magnet
  - 128 Solar output
  - 129 Fully ready
  - 8 Alternative venue
  - 9 Game
  - 10 Zip
  - 11 Mouth liquid
  - 12 Billy Joel hit
  - 13 Planet Mork came from
  - 14 Suffix with social
  - 15 Ad- —
  - 16 Rare violin
  - 17 Undercoat for painting on wood
  - 18 West German city
  - 21 People who mimic
  - 24 "What's — ya?"
  - 29 Brother or aunt: Abbr.
  - 32 Tangelo trademark
  - 33 Tilts one's body toward
  - 34 Bank claim
  - 35 Fleur-de- —
  - 36 Israeli arm
  - 37 Poke fun at
  - 38 Conduit
  - 39 Coll. hotshot
  - 40 Motivate
  - 44 Island near Venezuela
  - 45 College Web site suffix
  - 46 Set- — (sharp fights)
  - 47 Old United rival
  - 49 Oklahoma oil city
  - 50 Mosaic work
  - 51 Certain skin bulge
  - 53 "You — see this!"
  - 54 — Martin (cognac)
  - 55 British queen
  - 56 "Beware the — of March!"
  - 61 Coke Zero alternative
  - 62 Witch's blemish
  - 64 Secy., e.g.
  - 65 Moreover
  - 66 Vapor
  - 68 Land in water, in Italy
  - 69 Use, as a tool
  - 70 Sweat of one's —
  - 71 "Kill — killed!"
  - 72 Hold in check
  - 73 Small state ruled by a sovereign
  - 74 Eve's man
  - 78 Actor Max von —
  - 80 Rocker Barrett
  - 81 CBS drama
  - 82 Turn rancid
  - 84 Pet parasites
  - 85 With a sharp picture, for short
  - 86 Hymn start
  - 88 Epithet for Alexander
  - 89 Be a ratfink
  - 90 Alexis I, e.g.
  - 92 Jackie's hubby #2
  - 93 Offense
  - 97 Almost
  - 98 Six-pt. plays
  - 99 Cry like —
  - 100 Amply skilled
  - 102 Rundown
  - 103 Bards' Muse
  - 104 Singer Hall
  - 105 Oven maker
  - 106 Spiteful
  - 107 Passes idly, as time
  - 108 Dryly funny
  - 113 Slaughter of baseball
  - 114 James with a Pulitzer
  - 115 Discreet call
  - 117 MPG monitor
  - 118 Chaplin's title
  - 119 — -fi flick
  - 121 Always, poetically
  - 122 Oldies group — Na Na
  - 123 "Tonka" star Mineo

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