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The Madera County Transportation Commission is working with the Fresno Council of Governments to develop ideas for potential improvements to Highway 41 and Avenue 9

By Randy Bailey

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The Madera County Transportation Commission is working with the Fresno Council of Governments to develop ideas for potential improvements to Highway 41 and Avenue 9 since those two routes have been identified as playing a central role in our region's "mobility network." The SR 41 and Avenue 9 Sustainable Corridors Study is looking to analyze existing and future travel needs and then developing strategies to meet those needs. In addition, a big part of the study is to achieve air quality goals and supporting a healthy environment for the residents of both counties. A major driving force behind the study is the growth of southeast Madera County with its developments at Riverstone, Tesoro Viejo, Rio Mesa and others.

Nine Project Goals

The study has identified nine project goals based on equity, sustainability and resiliency.

In the area of "equity," literature from the study states that the study area is characterized by "diverse demographics related to ethnicity, socio-economic status and transit dependency." The study states there is a heavy concentration of Hispanics, seniors and disabled people along these corridors and "the guiding principle of equity seeks to increase mobility and reduce the disproportionate burden placed on the disadvantaged communities."



In addition, "sustainability" is a key guiding principle of the study. It refers to "the importance of improving the environmental conditions in Fresno and Madera Counties." Poor air quality stemming from vehicle exhaust is estimated to have led to increased green-

house gas emissions. With how quickly Southeast Madera County is growing, it is expected that the population's exposure to harmful air pollutants will increase.

"Resiliency" refers to the ability of residents to adapt and to thrive under adverse circumstances. By ensuring that both Madera and Fresno Counties are equipped with adaptable infrastructure and flexible planning, it is anticipated that future impacts and disruptions can be minimized or mitigated. The SR 41 and Avenue 9 Sustainable Corridors Study seeks to propose climate resilient infrastructure and solutions that can support long-term growth and stability in the region.

The nine project goals are listed as: Congestion; Air Quality; Traffic Management; Walking and Biking; Access; Connectivity; Safety; Local Economy; and Health and Well.

The Goals

In the area of traffic congestion, the study aims to introduce traffic management technology, operational improvements and alternative transportation modes including walking, biking and transit along both corridors.

In regard to enhancing air quality, the study supports the deployment of private and public electric vehicles along this segment to reduce the impacts of greenhouse gas emissions, including a fleet of electric buses.

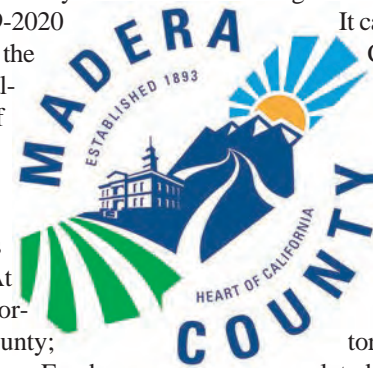
For traffic management, the study seeks to understand the volume of vehicles and their respective travel length, thereby determining traffic flows through the area. This will allow the study group to introduce "sustainable transportation demand strategies" which will reduce traffic speeds and conflicts between users of the road.

Walking and biking are a goal of the study not only for traffic management, but also for the question of "equity." The study states that equitable access to transportation is one of primary importance, since the focus of this study aims to improve mobility access for all community members, regardless of income, ability or vehicle access. The new developments along northern Highway 41 all have specific plans related to their communities providing for accessibility by foot or bike, indicating to the study that enhancing the active transportation infra-

Please see **STUDY** on P. 15

Grand Jury Final Report Out

The most current copy of the Madera County Grand Jury Final Report is now out. It reflects the work done by the Grand Jury for the 2019-2020 time period, addressing the six following topics: California Department of Corrections' and Rehabilitation Facilities; Unmet Transit Needs in Madera County: Riders without Routes; "At Promise" Student Opportunities in Madera County; Madera County Food Safety/Food Inspections; City of Madera Police Department: Unveiling Truths of Law Enforcement; and Madera County and City of Madera Government: Public Servants or Self Serving?



if needed to audit fiscal or management records, as well as subpoena witnesses to give testimony before its members.

It can ask advice of the County Counsel or District Attorney, may discuss problems with the Presiding Judge of the Court and, in matters that might not be properly answered by these officials, the Grand Jury may request advice from the State Attorney General. Once completed, the Grand Jury submits recommendations for improvement of County and City government to the Board of Supervisors.

The Grand Jury primarily focuses on civil – or non-criminal – activities. It investigates County and City government, special districts and school districts. Once its investigations are done, the Grand Jury makes recommendations for improvements, hopefully to save taxpayers' dollars and to improve services.

The Grand Jury investigates complaints by private citizens, local government officials and employees, regarding actions and performances of public officials. Grand Jury members are sworn to secrecy and, except in very rare circumstances, neither minutes or records of its meetings can be subpoenaed by any outside body, assuring that all complaints will be handled in an entirely confidential manner. If the Grand Jury believes evidence submitted is sufficient, a detailed investigation will be held.

The committees that comprise the Grand Jury concentrate on investigating certain departments of local government and their functions. These committees study complaints submitted by Madera County citizens and then visit various facilities, meet with officials, investigate records and documents and draw conclusions regarding the departments in question.

The Grand Jury's function is to review the conduct of government to assure honest, efficient government in the best interest of the people of Madera County.

You can see the complete 2019-2020 Madera County Grand Jury Final Report at www.MaderaCounty.com/grand-jury.

The Grand Jury can also hire experts

Kindergarten and TK Registration

Kindergarten and Transitional Kindergarten (TK) registration is beginning for the 2021-2022 School Year. Please bring your future kindergartener with you to your registration appointment as assessments will be given during the registration process. **In order to register your child, you will need the following:**

Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis (5); D. Measles, Mumps, Rubella (2); E. Hepatitis B (3); F. Varicella (Chicken Pox) (2)

1. Your child must be 5 by Sept. 1, 2021 for Kindergarten. If your child will turn 5 between Sept. 2 and Dec. 2, 2021 your child will qualify for TK. You will need to bring in his/her birth certificate to verify either.

3. Proof of residency within the Golden Valley Unified School District boundaries: A. This can be a current utility bill, tax records, rental agreement, etc.

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.

4. A completed registration packet.
Webster Elementary (645-3540):

Feb. 22-24, 2021 by appointment only – Kinder and TK Registration packets can be picked up Monday through Friday between 7:30 a.m. and 4 p.m. in the Webster Office beginning Feb. 1. When you pick up your packet, you will schedule an appointment to return your packet for registration.

Sierra View Elementary (645-3560):

Please see **REG** on P. 10

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Google Review -- "Had an AC service done there as my unit was only blowing warm air. Yuk! Warren picked up my vehicle at home and delivered it back with AC working great. He went over the whole job with me in detail. That's service. Made me feel very comfortable about the whole thing, and so much so that today they are replacing my rusty and leaky radiator and servicing the whole cooling system. Their prices are very reasonable and you can be confident that the quote for the service remains virtually the same as the final price. I am very pleased with their service and all the care and attention they deliver. I certainly recommend Complete Car Care for all your car service. :)"
Don -- Madera Ranchos

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Letters

Dear Editor:

How hypocritical of social media to block Trump when so many other users have said worse and promoted social unrest.

Yes, some of you will point to Wednesday's action at the nation's capital as "the worst of the worst" and those people are the ones who have forgotten or ignored the riots over the summer and the reactions of the democrats which encouraged and condoned the unlawful and destructive acts.

This is a time for uniting and not continuously dividing. The media, social networks and people in power use fear and confusion to manipulate us. This is a time to think for yourself, look at an issue from all sides, stop relying on the "news" to inform you and respect the opinions of others.

We, the people, have power and it's time to exercise it in a positive way.

Jan Peirsol
Madera Ranchos

Dear Editor:

A Patriot is a person who loves, supports and defends his or her country and its interests with devotion.

The Madera Ranchos Patriots are looking for like-minded people who are willing to step up to the plate to protect this community, our families, our children, our homes, our property, our churches, our livelihoods, our businesses and more. We would like to get people of like minds together to organize, communicate, train and formulate a plan to protect this community in the case there is a complete breakdown of the political and lawful entities in this county, state and country in the near future; or in the case of a natural disaster OR in the case of undesirable influences trying to come into our community.

If you are a God-fearing individual; if you are a person who values family; if you are community minded; if you are a person with special skills, abilities, experiences, training or knowledge, we would love to have you aboard. Our goal is NOT to go out and seek conflict, but simply to provide protection for this community if the need should ever arise. We are NOT a militia! We are NOT extremists! We are fathers, mothers, business owners, sons, daughters ... Americans.

Our goal is to simply take care of our own, should the need arise. We are looking for:

People with law enforcement back-

grounds and training.

People with military experience and training.

People with medical training, especially triage, emergency care, etc.

People with communication skills and HAM capabilities.

People with contacts for supplies, including medical, food, communications, firearms, etc.

People with weapons training, skills and abilities.

People who can lead, organize, follow leadership, work together, support others, take on rolls and responsibilities.

People, regardless of age, abilities or inabilities who are willing to help in any way possible.

If this is you, we would like to meet. We would like to get organized. We would like to train. We will vet individuals for our team, so if you have a criminal record, to protect our goals and objectives, please don't come. If you are a felon, with a criminal record, we do not hold that against you – BUT, due to the nature of our goal, NO ONE with a felony background will be allowed.

John Devere
Madera Ranchos
559-779-7858

Dear Editor:

I didn't like the President's speech on January 6th. I thought he was wrong to assert that the Vice President and Congress can pick and choose which electoral votes to count. He was wrong to set such a confrontational tone in a politically tense situation.

But what did he actually say? His exact words were, "I know that everyone here will soon be marching over to the Capitol building to peacefully and patriotically make your voices heard." That's impeachable? That's called freedom of speech.

He also threatened to oppose candidates in future elections. By the way, that was directed at Republicans like me who had resolved to uphold the constitutional process and protect the Electoral College. So what? That's called politics.

If we impeached every politician who gave a fiery speech to a crowd of partisans, this Capitol would be deserted. That's what the President did. That's all he did. He specifically told the crowd to protest "peacefully and patriotically." The vast majority of them did.

But every movement has a lunatic

Please see **LETTERS** on P. 7

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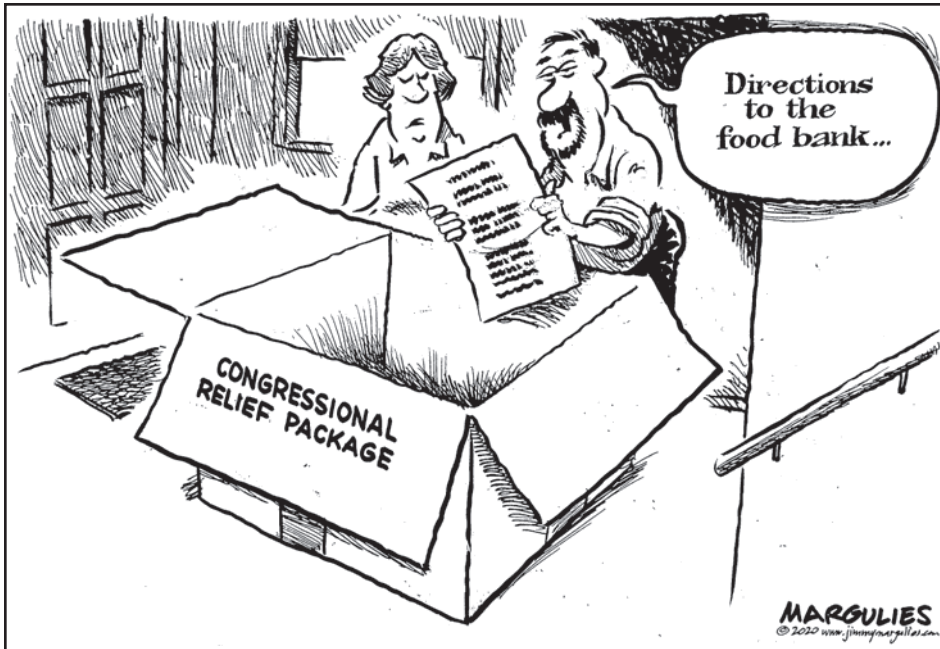


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Guest Editorial

Eliminating Trump at All Costs

By Jared Dyson

Democrats in the House once again impeached President Donald Trump. Their hatred of the man who has served as America's 45th President continues to run strong and this time, they convinced 10 Republicans to defect and join them. It was a record second impeachment of a man who will leave office in just one week.

That certainly has not stopped the Democrats, who are committed at all costs to try to eliminate Trump from office, America and existence. If Democrats had it their way, President Donald Trump would be locked in a room buried underground never to be heard from again. To say they hate him is almost an understatement.

While the Left continues their march against conservative values, Trump has found himself as the one taking all the blame. Republicans are quickly placing blame on Trump for inciting riots when he specifically asked for peace. Republican leadership is blaming Trump for contaminating their party when he energized their voters more than ever.

No one ever said that President Donald Trump was perfect. No one said that he made all the correct statements, acted like a saint for his entire life, or any of the other ridiculous ac-

cusations that the Left has launched against President Donald Trump. Instead, they are focused on trying to fit someone into this perfect image, an image that the Democrats have crafted into their minds.

Democrats have said that Trump is a racist, a white supremacist, a fascist and has incited riots at the Capitol. If any of the 10 Republicans that voted to impeach Trump had any backbone, they would have quickly seen the ridiculous reasoning behind this impeachment attempt. They claim that President Donald Trump is a racist and a white supremacist. They have tried to lay the grounds for this claim behind the Charlottesville events in 2017. They claim that President Donald Trump supported the violence because he said there were good people on both sides. They fail to report that Trump tweeted a call to end the violence and then later spoke about condemning the violence.

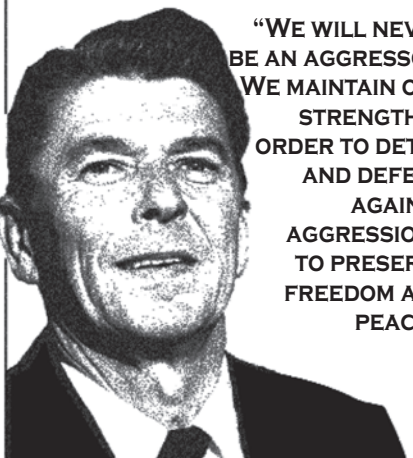
They have called Trump a fascist throughout his term in office. They have said that he craves power and is out to force his will on others. Except that's not exactly true. Throughout the Black Lives Matter and Antifa riots of 2020, President Donald Trump offered support but was told no thanks.

They have criticized his coronavirus response since the first opportunity. They claim that he should have issued a mandatory shutdown of the country, forced mask mandates and have even suggested mandatory vaccines at one point. Yet again, President Donald Trump, the "fascist" resisted and said that this is best handled by the states in a more local fashion.

Now they want to blame him for the riots at the Capitol last week. They say that his comments caused the mobs to want to march to the Capitol and injure lawmakers. Matt Walsh from The Daily Wire says it well:

One must engage in all sorts of mental gymnastics to pretend that "fight like hell" is anything but a very common figure of speech. Sen. Richard Blumenthal said he was going to "fight like hell" against Trump's Supreme Court nominee. Did

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PEACE."**

**RONALD REAGAN
SAYING MORE IN ONE QUOTE
THAN OTHERS SAY IN A LIFETIME**

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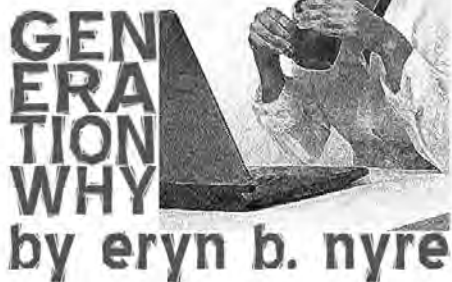
Bye-Bye 2020 ...

Like most people, at the end of every year I take stock of my life and think about everything I have accomplished, goals I didn't meet and areas I can improve in the coming year. As I look back on 2020, I think of all the magnificent things I've been able to do. I traveled to far off, wondrous lands. I dined out in delicious restaurants with all of my friends nearly every night. I went to the theater and enjoyed fantastic movies with amazing picture and surround sound. I went to spectacular Christmas parties and spent the holiday season with all of my friends and family. Wait, that doesn't sound right ...

Ok, I remember now. I spent the majority of the year locked in my house being told I am not allowed to go outside lest I catch a virus that, to date, has a survivability rate of 98.3 percent (CDC numbers as of 12/29/2020: 19,232,843 Total Cases in the U.S. and 334,029 deaths, or 1.7 percent).

It's been a contentious year, and that's putting it mildly. From the run on toilet paper and eggs, to nationwide lockdowns that broke the economy and shattered people's lives, to being told we had to schedule our Christmas gatherings via Zoom, it's been a year unlike any other. Then throw in some riots poorly masquerading as peaceful protests, a call to defund the police, a contested presidential election and we have ourselves a real crap show now. It's hard to imagine that even the little darlings in Hollywood could come up with such a plotline.

As if all of that isn't enough, we have the social media police to contend with. Whether it's Facebook fact checkers censoring data and controlling the narrative or friends and family berating you for



having an opinion – or worse telling a joke – all you need to know is: You're wrong. You can wear the mask and practice social distancing all you want, but you cannot ask questions or express concerns about things like people who are unable to provide for their families or suffering severe mental anxiety and depression due to forced seclusion. All of this is in the name of saving lives, so you are either with them or you want everyone's grandma and grandpa to die alone in the hospital.

But I do have questions. For example, if closing businesses and forcing people to stay at home will stop the spread of the virus, then why didn't it work the first time when the majority of the country shut down? And if it, in fact, did not work then why are we trying it again now? Here's another question, why is the 1.7 percent

Despite my fear of the coming year, I choose to cling to hope. I hope we fight back against the socialist agenda bearing down upon us. I hope we work together to rebuild our economy. I hope we come together to fight against those who seek to destroy us from within ...

death rate more worrisome than a person having to permanently close the business that was their sole source of income? Why is it more worrisome than the suicide rates that were already on the rise prior to this pandemic? Why is it more worrisome than people putting off necessary medical treatment because they have been so filled with fear they won't even leave their house to see their doctor? Why is it more worrisome than a completely toppled economy

Please see **GENWHY** on P. 7

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GENWHY cont. from P. 6

and a second great depression? Who decided that avoiding a mere 1.7 percent chance of death is more important than living a quality life? Moreover, why did we as a society let them?

I don't know what 2021 has in store for us, but I'm afraid. I am afraid because we have a party about to take over the White House that has spent the last four years viciously dividing our country. I'm afraid because we have a government filled with people who are willing to overlook reasonable suspicion of election fraud so long as the bad man is out of the big seat. I'm afraid because there are governors willing to put their own desire for power over the general wellbeing of their citizenry.

You know what I am not afraid of, though? I'm not afraid of the 1.7 percent death rate. Not because I don't think it could happen to me – I know it could. Not because it couldn't happen to the people I love – I know that could happen as well. I'm

not afraid because there are many things far worse than death, a few of which are: Tyrannical governments, socialism, cities without strong police forces, widespread and rampant poverty and breadlines. And for anyone who just scoffed at the mention of breadlines, read about what happened in New Mexico in November and December where everyone, including the elderly, waited for hours in the cold just to buy groceries.

Despite my fear of the coming year, I choose to cling to hope. I hope we fight back against the socialist agenda bearing down upon us. I hope we work together to rebuild our economy. I hope we come together to fight against those who seek to destroy us from within. I hope we hold our government accountable to our constitution. I hope we soon see ourselves free from the tyranny we have experienced in 2020. And most importantly, I hope each and every one of you find health, peace and many blessings in 2021 and beyond. May God bless you all, and may God bless America, because we are going to need it!

LETTERS cont. from P. 4

fringe.

Suppressing free speech is not the answer; holding rioters accountable for their actions is the answer. And we are. IF we had prosecuted BLM and Antifa rioters across the country with the same determination these last six months, this incident may not have happened at all.

Short of declaring war, the power of impeachment is the most solemn and consequential act that Congress can take. To use it in this manner – in the heat of the moment, with no hearings, no due process, many members phoning in their votes after a hastily called debate, exactly one week before a new President is to take office, trivializes this power to the point of caricature.

The Democrats have won everything in sight: the House, the Senate and the Presidency. In a Republic, that calls for magnanimity by the victors. Only in a banana republic does it call for vengeance.

Benjamin Franklin warned that "Passion governs, and she never governs wisely." In our passions this week we have set some dangerous new precedents that will haunt us for years to come. Yesterday, we redefined intemperate speech as a physical incapacity

requiring removal from office. Today we define it as a high crime and misdemeanor.

The moment any member of this body gives an impassioned speech, and the lunatic fringe of their movement takes license from it, be prepared to answer to this new precedent we establish today. I could cite plenty of provocative speeches made by Democrats that directly preceded violence this summer, but we've already had enough of that.

After 600,000 Americans had perished in the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln appealed to the "better angels of our nature." He said, "With malice toward none; with charity for all ... let us bind up the nation's wounds." Those words were so important to the unity of the nation they are inscribed in marble at the Lincoln Memorial.

I cannot think of a more petty, vindictive and gratuitous act than to impeach an already defeated President a week before he is to leave office. President-elect Biden's promise to heal the nation becomes a hollow mockery in the harsh reality of this unconstitutional act.

God help our Country.

Tom McClintock
U.S. Congress
California 4th District



Aunt Jean's Ranchos Recipes

by Jean Briner

Super Bowl? Super Food!

(January 2011)

Editor's Note: With the passing of Aunt Jean, I have decided to bring you a "Best Of" of her recipes over the past 10 years. Good recipes are timeless and I hope you enjoy them all over again.

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 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 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 gua-

camole (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

- 1/4 C Brown Sugar (packed)
- 1/4 C Cooking sherry
- 3/4 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

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 have each one bring something different to eat.

- 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.

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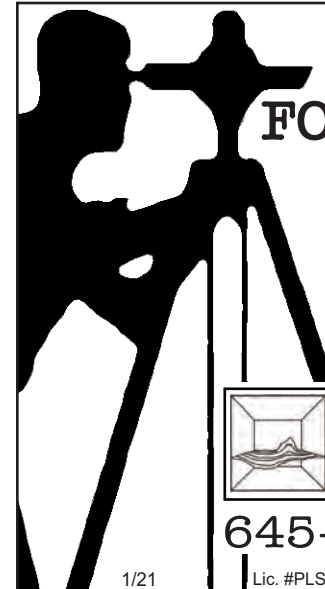
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Kiwanis Korner

Inaugural Ranchos "Drive By" Home Decorating Contest a Success

By Nancy Wayne

The inaugural Kiwanis Drive By Christmas House Decorating Contest was a big success with 21 houses participating. The decorations were bright and cheerful, and many people commented how much fun to drive around and experience the spirit of Christmas in the greater Ranchos neighborhoods.

Kiwanis members would like to thank local businesses who helped with advertisement and donations. Kiwanis members Bev Delk, Leslie Carella and Nancy Wayne walked the businesses and neighborhoods handing out fliers and posters. Bev Walsh helped with social media advertising and the printing of maps.

Three businesses donated gift certificates: Ranchos Liberty Café; Simply Scrumptious; and Pizza Factory. The Kiwanis club donated \$50 in cash for the winners of the contest.



Also, a big thanks to Fernwood Nursery, as members handed out maps/ballots in their parking lot at the kickoff event Dec. 12. Becky Koop donated her speaker system for Christmas music and Marie Cameron brought a fire pit to keep members warm. President Richard Wayne provided a pop-up tent and Thom Walsh managed the fire pit as people came by to pick up the maps. Everyone seemed to feel the Christmas cheer. Virginia Vick offered the Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce front door for a location for the ballots to be dropped off after voting.

The winners of the Christmas House Decorated Contest were: 1st Place, #15 Jeff Dizney; 2nd Place #19 Jerry Schoenherr; 3rd and 4th Place (tie) #7 Joel and Bailey Nelson, and #12 Jeff and Julie Clark.

Thank you to all who participated. The sparkly, bright and cheerful homes showed the spirit of the Ranchos at Christmas.




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Straight Truths to Combat Lies

Caller ID identified the incoming call as PG&E. When I answered, the gentleman greeted me and said that our power would be turned off in about 45 minutes. My first thought was that they were working in our area, then he added, "... unless your balance is paid."

It took longer than it should have for me to identify him as a liar and a thief. First, I was put at ease by the familiar. Caller ID said it was PG&E. We've had notifications about shutdowns. When he added the part about the past due bill, I went into panic mode which removes the ability to think reasonably. Thirdly, I was ignorant about when it was last paid since my husband pays the bills. Those three elements – familiarity, panic, and ignorance – gave me cause for briefly succumbing to the liar and would-be thief on the other end of the line. If you're struggling with organization and productivity, you may be listening to a liar and a thief.

The liar says, "You never finish stuff, so why start?" Sound familiar? "You're already overloaded with things to do. Your life will implode if you add one more." In a panic? "You can't do it because you don't know how." Feel ignorant?

Don't Believe the Lies

Believing these lies steals your peace of mind. When disorganization disrupts a relationship, the thief has won again. Time wasted looking for things steals time from higher priorities. Your wallet is a target too: Late fees due to mail clutter, payments for extra storage, buying replacements for

things you can't find. Lies about organization and productivity are often more subtle than my would-be thief who held my electricity hostage for a \$900 payment. Don't beat yourself up if you have succumbed. My remedy was to hang up on the liar and call the place I knew would give me the straight truth — the real PG&E. (Be wary of the scam. I've already had a second call just like it.)

Straight Truths

Here are straight truths to combat the lies that threaten your organization and productivity:

1. You have finished stuff. Maybe it was high school, or a Master's degree, or a personal project or goal. Maybe you've been sober for two years or 20. Each day is an accomplishment. List three things you've done in life that were challenging. Now record one organizing project you'd like to accomplish. Start small. A drawer, your purse, or maybe your pet supplies. Combat the lie with the truth that you can accomplish this goal.

2. Adding is sometimes subtracting. Look for a way to be productive that will open up time and space in your life rather than put you over the edge. Do you look forward to the weekend until you notice the huge pile of clean laundry or dirty dishes that accumulated during the week? Adding a 10-minute task of putting away each clean load or doing the dishes nightly can subtract an overwhelming pile at week's end.

3. You know enough. Fortunately for all of us, getting organized isn't rocket science. Almost all projects include these four steps: Purging, putting like things together, creating homes and putting things back where they go. If you get stuck on any of those, feel free to give me a call. I'll answer as long as the caller ID doesn't say PG&E!

Contact *Organized by Choice* (because things don't always fall into place) at P.O. Box 26152, Fresno, CA 93729, call 559-871-3314 or email info@organizedbychoice.com. You can visit www.organizedbychoice.com when you go online.

Lies about organization and productivity are often more subtle than my would-be thief who held my electricity hostage for a \$900 payment. Don't beat yourself up if you have succumbed.

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REG cont. from P. 2

Mar. 3-4, 2021 – 8 a.m. to noon by appointment only. Please call the school office at 645-3560 to schedule an appointment. Registration packets can be picked up Monday through Friday between 7:30 a.m. and 4 p.m. in the Sierra View office beginning Feb. 9. Please return all registration forms completed by Feb. 26.

Stone Creek Elementary (395-5264): Thursday, Feb. 25, 2021, by appointment only – Kinder and TK Registration packets can be picked up Monday through Fri-

day between 7:30 a.m. and 4 p.m. in the temporary Stone Creek Office, located in the Gear Barn at The Lodge, beginning Feb. 1.

At all of the schools, when you pick up your packet you will schedule an appointment to return your packet for registration. In addition, if you have concerns about your immunization records and would like to verify that your child has all of the necessary shots before your appointment, please feel free to bring the immunization card to the office when you pick up your packet.

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Senior Report

Writing Class Changes Minds

By Margaret Tynan

Though the Ranchos/Hills Seniors Center remains closed for indoor events, we are hopeful that as more people get the COVID19 vaccine, we will be able to resume some of our regular activities. Stay tuned for updates as they become available. The Center will hold its outdoor monthly sale on Saturday, Feb. 6 from 8 a.m. to noon. As usual, the Treasure House features a wide variety of items including clothing for all ages, household items, books and toys, to name a few. Find plants for sprucing up your yard at the Garden Sale. We appreciate your wearing a mask and maintaining physical distancing while shopping. Donations are always welcomed and appreciated. Make your check out to Ranchos Hills

Seniors and mail to 37330 Berkshire Dr., Madera, CA 93636. Please note: At this time, we are only able to accept donations of physical items by appointment. Please call 645-4864 to schedule.

The Center's Writing Group continues to meet on Zoom. Being part of the group has helped to keep us connected and engaged in thoughtful creative activity. Everyone in the group is a novice at creative writing. We've had many discussions about the fears of not being able to write, not having writing skills or not being creative. At one of our recent meetings, Shirley Tickel shared a short piece on her personal endeavor to overcome those fears. It has a message from which we might all benefit.

Help for My Writing

by Shirley Tickel

I am having so much trouble with writing, or I think I do. I enjoy hearing the writings from the class. [The members] write and express themselves so well. Maybe when they started writing, they didn't do as well.

I read an article on the internet the other day entitled Three Keys to

Overcoming Perfectionism. It began with a Zig Ziglar quote: "Anything worth doing is worth doing poorly, until you can learn to do it well." It went on to discuss the first of three keys: embrace failure. I guess I should not be afraid of making mistakes and keep on learning from them. The thing is, being aware of those mistakes.

The next key was: don't worry what others say. This is a bad habit of mine. I got this partly from my

Mom. She would always admonish, especially when I was a kid, "What will the neighbors say?" I can at times still hear her say it.

The last key was: try something new. I am thinking that starting this writing class would be in that category. The article encourages trying something outside my comfort zone, something I've never tried

before. It suggests this would help me to push past the need to be perfect and allow me to build a habit of not caring what others will think or say. I should roll up my sleeves and get ready to learn from my mistakes and failures. I should just let the words flow. I'm going to try this and see where it will take me. I can only try.

Shirley moved from Fresno in 1988 with her husband to the Madera Ranchos. After joining the Center nearly 18 years ago, she served as Treasurer for 12 years and is currently on the Board. She has always been an avid reader. She shared that as a child she would read by flashlight under the covers after lights-out. Now, she is trying her hand at writing.

If you are 50 years or older and want to express your creative self, join the Ranchos/Hills Seniors Writing Group. Contact Rosemary Janis at Rosemary@myrancho.net. The upcoming meetings are Monday, Feb. 1 and 15, from 2 to 3:30 p.m.

Thought for February: "Failure is success in progress." — Albert Einstein



Senior Center member and budding author, Shirley Tickel.

By Wyatt Morgan and Corinna Martinez

On Nov. 18, Achievement Night was held. Achievement Night is when the top members in any of the clubs in Madera are recognized. Congratulations



to everyone who did well on their record books this year. Here are the results for Achievement Night for members of Sierra Shadows 4-H:

Category of Public Speaking: Wyatt Morgan, Delaney Rocca, Hunter William-Smith and Griffin William-Smith all got gold medals. Corinna Martinez won a platinum medal.

Category of Shooting Sports: Hunter Williams-Smith, Griffin Williams-Smith and Wyatt Morgan medalists.

Bronze Star winners: Corinna Martinez, Delaney Rocca and Wyatt Morgan.

Platinum Star winner: Lily Kier.

Record Book Awards: Wyatt Morgan First Place medalist in the Beef Project. Micah Lee County Winner in Outdoor Adventures; Hunter

Williams-Smith County Winner in Communications and Public Speaking; Delaney Rocca First Place medalist in Arts and Crafts; Aubrey Rocca First Place medalist in Foods and Nutrition; Emily Waldren Second Place medalist in Foods and Nutrition; Lily Kier County Winner in Horses; Sierra Gonzalez County Winner in Self Determined; Jake Poore First Medalist in Self Determined; and Corinna Martinez Fifth Medalist in Swine.



Sierra Shadows 4-H members during their Jingle Jangle walk in December.

Officer Books: Emily Waldren medalist for Historian; Wyatt Morgan and Corinna Martinez County Winner for Reporter; Lily Kier County Winner for Reporting Secretary; and Taylor Cardoza County Winner for Treasurer. Great job everyone. Sierra Shadows 4-H is so proud of you.

On Dec. 5, the Sierra Shadows 4-H club held its inaugural annual Jingle Jangle walk. Typically, we would hold a Christmas feast for our members but because of COVID restrictions, we needed to meet outside. We met at the house of one of our leaders and lined up to walk around the neighborhood looking at the beautiful Christmas lights while practicing social distancing. The walk finished at another leader's house where each of the projects in our club had decorated their own Christmas tree. We got to walk through and look at all these trees. There was a hayride for those members who didn't want to walk and a lot of our members came decked out in lights and Christmas spirit. This was a very fun event that we look forward to making an annual event from now on.

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Upcoming Events

With the changes brought by Covid19 restrictions enacted by the State of California and Madera County, fundraising for non-profit groups like the Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce have been sharply curtailed. Beloved annual events like the Flatlanders Day Parade and Crafts Fair, Community Crab Feed and others have been brought to a halt, along with the funding they provide. The Chamber is actively looking at alternatives, including grants, donations and "virtual" events online. As those alternatives become available the Chamber will keep you informed about them. The last thing the Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce and its members want to do is sacrifice their great relationship with the people of the best little community in Central California.

If you have a suggestion for the Chamber, contact Chamber President Alma Griffen at 645-4001 and come to the next monthly meeting on Wednesday, Feb. 10 at 6:30 p.m. at 37167 Ave. 12 # 5C. We hope to see you there and get through this together.

When's the NEXT Chamber of Commerce Meeting?

The Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce would love to see you at our next meeting, Wednesday, February 10 at 6:30 p.m., 37167 Ave. 12 Suite 5C in the Maywood Center. Come join us and see what's going on in your community. Call us at 645-4001.

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In Memoriam

“Mr. Bill”

William Leonard Cosner

Passed November 17, 2020 • 77 Years Old

William Leonard (Mr. Bill) Cosner was called home, with his family by his side, from Kuna, Idaho on Nov. 17, 2020 at the age of 77.

Bill was born in Washington, D.C. to Howard and Ruth Cosner and lived most of his childhood in Parkersburg, West Virginia. He graduated from Parkersburg High School in 1962 then joined the Navy where a first dance turned into 56 years of marriage which began Sept. 5, 1964 in Chicago. After requesting the East Coast, the Navy stationed him in Pearl Harbor from which his last cruise was spent patrolling the shores of Vietnam.

After his discharge from the Navy, he graduated from Cal Poly and worked in food processing, which took him all over the world. Following retirement, he moved to Kuna, ID where he was baptized and joined the Kuna Baptist Church family.

He enjoyed time with family and friends, golfing with his best friend Ed and anybody who was brave enough to join them, and target, trap and skeet shooting. He ate halibut sandwiches “just for the halibut,” drank Blue Moon and listened to Willie Nelson and talk radio non-stop.

He is survived by his wife Barbara; daughter “sweetheart” Leah and husband Darby; two grandchildren Zachary and Bryce; sister Patricia Schaefer; three brothers: Howard E. Cosner, Jr., Dennis K. Cosner and Daryl L. Cosner. He was preceded in death by his sister, Connie Lee Conger. Bill will also be greatly missed by his furry companions Buster and Bella who shared twice daily walks and sunrises together.

A memorial service was held on Dec. 5, 2020 at the Kuna Baptist Church.

In lieu of flowers, donations to the Oncology Department at the Boise Veterans Hospital (www.boise.va.gov) would be appreciated.

EDITORIAL cont. from P. 5

anyone imagine that he intended to engage in literal fistfights on the floor of the Senate?

Time and again, Trump asked for peace last week. What did he receive for those requests for peace? Censorship from big tech and a second impeachment amid calls for invoking the 25th Amendment.

I have never said Trump is perfect. Many times I have criticized how he said something or how he acted. While there may be some personality traits I do not like, President Donald Trump is not any of the things that the left has called him or blamed him for. The common theme in everything that has happened throughout the Trump administration is that the Left coordinated it. In each situation, President Donald Trump fell victim to the Left and how the Democrats and mainstream media were coordinating to eliminate him from existence.

Radical left-wing protesters destroyed cities and towns across the country in riots last year. Democrat politicians came out in support of these acts one after the other. Kamala Harris said that the violence needed to continue. Those in Congress marched with them and said they supported the movement. They blamed Trump for it, because of his racism. Except they were the ones inciting the riots. They were the ones fanning the flames of racial tension.

Hillary Clinton and the DNC fabricated an entire Russia hoax. They fed it to Nancy Pelosi and the mainstream media who ridiculed Trump with it for months. After a thorough investigation and millions of dollars, no evidence was produced. This time, they decided

there was no need for an investigation or evidence. They bypassed it all and voted on impeachment.

For four years, the segment of the American people who are gullible were conditioned by the Left to accept these things and the way of thinking. They disliked the violence that the left incited and supported. They disliked the thoughts of corruption in their government. They disliked the thoughts of continued racism and a fascist being in office. In just four years, the mainstream media and the Democrats conditioned part of the American people and many on the Republican side to hate President Donald Trump. Not that there was any evidence of any of the accusations, but because it was only politically and socially acceptable to hate him. The mainstream media and the Democrats started their conditioning project in 2016 with the Steele Dossier. Now, the project nears completion as they have turned a large portion of Americans against President Donald Trump and Trump supporters.

Trump and his supporters are being banned from social media, from expressing their free speech and from conducting business in our free nation. You see, those are the actions of fascists. In each case, Democrats were simply conditioning us for their final attack on President Donald Trump.

Joe Biden will take office in just one week. I hope it does not take long for Americans to learn the difficult lesson that we are about to learn.

Jared Dyson is the Editor-in-Chief at The Liberty Loft and host of The Jared Dyson Show. This editorial originally appeared on www.TheLibertyLoft.com.

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SEMUCU speaks

A Word of Hope

By Igal Treibatch

I used to say at this time of the year, "Happy New Year." I still say it, but I begin with "Have a Healthy" and then "Happy New Year." Lately, and in my own way, I pray more often for all of us to get over all the anxiety, sickness and discord we are experiencing these days. Ordinarily the tendency for human beings is to come together when there is a community upheaval. These days we are experiencing what I would consider as a double tragedy. The deep split, distancing and discourse of our society on one hand, and the COVID-19 Pandemic and its social distancing requirement on the other.

Having lost friends and family both to war and sickness brings it all to my awoken reality, along with the change to

what my future dreams were just a short time ago; and the real concerns to my family and friends and what kind of future to which we are walking. As usual, I like stability. It helps me chart my course in life and with less distress. As I see it, for now I am one of the lucky ones – still testing negative.

Looking back at humanity's history throughout the ages – the plagues/pandemics, the wars and discourse between people – those times are all behind us now. What we are experiencing these days will also pass. We as people tend to endure and come out stronger and smarter.

I do not know all of you, but I know you are of this earth and feeling much of what I am feeling these days. It is not hope but certainty that things will get better for us all. Wounds will heal as time passes. Remember the good times and bring them back. Share them with family and friends as often as you can and take solace in the fact

that humanity is here to stay and thrive.

It is not always easy, but this is the time to try and be kinder, more accepting and forgiving. More loving.

Be well my friends, my heart goes out to all of you.

Have a Healthy and Happy New Year.

As part of the social distancing, our

It is not always easy, but this is the time to try and be kinder, more accepting and forgiving. More loving ... Have a Healthy and Happy New Year.

monthly board meetings of the third Monday of each month will be held via telephone conferencing. The public is invited and encouraged to listen in and offer ideas of projects that can help improve our

community. To join in at 6 p.m. on Feb. 15, dial 312-757-3221. When prompted, dial the access code 715657949 #.

To call SEMCU for more information, call 559-363-9095, or reach the organization at www.semcu.org. You can also send an email to info@semcu.org.

SEMUCU is "By the Community, For the Community"

STUDY cont. from P. 2

structure in the surrounding area would be essential to locals.

The fifth project goal is access, meaning that all communities have equitable access to affordable and convenient transit options, including active and public transportation options. A goal of the study is that all communities within the study area reside within a reasonable distance of a transit stop or active transportation facilities.

The goal of offering connectivity is to increase connections between residential areas and key employment, education and recreation locations, thereby enhancing regional connectivity. The study found that since Highway 41 through the Ranchos is primarily rural, existing and future residents may require multiple transit connections to reach further destinations. The study mentions "first/last mile solutions." These are scenarios that help people get to and from public transportation stations and bus stops by providing shuttle buses, expanding bike and pedestrian access, and promoting expanded use of ridesharing apps for people trying to get to transit. The ultimate goal is

Please see **STUDY** on P. 18

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Thank 1970s Arab Oil

Hello 93636,

Last week a 2013 Ford Escape rolled into the shop with an overheating complaint. In the process of diagnostic, we discovered a Ford Technical Service Bulletin that addresses overheating complaints for certain turbocharged 1.6L Ford Escapes. Safety Recall 13S12 addresses potential localized overheating of the engine cylinder head which can result in a crack in the cylinder head and create a fire hazard due to leaking oil. The recall includes enhancements to the engine cooling system, engine shielding and a reflash for the Powertrain Control Module (PCM). I'm wondering how a PCM (computer) reflash can correct what appears to be a mechanical design issue? I was unable to locate any further information regarding the reflash so I suspect its purpose is to de-tune the engine and decrease stress on the cylinder head and cooling system.

Also, a 2007 Dodge Cummins diesel rolled into the shop with the same engine overheating complaint. After some challenging diagnostics we were able to determine the low side driver in the PCM was defective resulting in an engine cooling fan failure. The Dodge Cummins needs a PCM replacement.

If you are wondering how a PCM reflash and a PCM replacement became the correct repair for an overheating engine, let me explain.

It all began in 1975 with the Energy Policy and Conservation Act. The EPC Act

was the USA's response to the 1973 Arab Oil Embargo. With the EPC Act, congress established federal fuel economy standards starting with new 1978 model year passenger cars and light duty trucks. The 1975 legislation was intended to roughly double average fuel mileage for new cars to 27.5 miles per gallon by 1985 and 22.2 MPG for light duty trucks by 2007. The Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 again raised the fuel economy standards for America's cars, light trucks and SUVs to a combined fleet average of at least 35 MPG by 2020. In 2009 the Federal Government, state regulators and the auto industry established a national program to again increase Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) standards to approximately 49.6 MPG by 2025. As of December 2017, the on-road fleet average was about 21 MPG. As you can imagine, automotive engineers are looking at every part of the vehicle for potential fuel savings.

Here are some of the technologies born as the result of increased fuel mileage compliance standards: Hybrid and Electric Vehicle Technologies; Smaller Turbo Charged Engines; Cylinder Deactivation; Idle Stop; Direct Fuel Injection; Variable Valve Timing; Variable Valve Lift; Deceleration Fuel Shut-Off; Continuously Variable Transmissions; Electric Steering; Smart Air Conditioning; Smart Charging Systems; Electric Water Pumps; Electric Engine Cooling System Fans; and Regenerative Braking. Other new technologies include plastic everything. Weight is the enemy of fuel mileage. Many ve-



The oil embargo in the 1970s was an inconvenience, but it also spurred new automotive technology that is still in use today.

hicles now have plastic valve covers, oil pans, intake manifolds, radiators, water pumps and cooling fans. Even though everything is smaller and lighter, electrical driven components are much more efficient than their mechanically driven counterparts due to precise control by the PCM.

OK, back to our case studies.

A modern automotive, mechanically driven water pump circulates approximately 1 gallon of coolant every second. During freeway driving that's 3,600 gallons per hour, every hour. With an electric water pump the PCM modulates the impeller speed to circulate only the minimal amount of coolant necessary to maintain proper engine temperature. By reducing the amount of coolant being circulated, we reduce the energy needed to circulate the coolant and thereby increase efficiency and fuel mileage.

It turns out our 2013 EcoBoost Ford Escape had a traditional mechanically driven water pump and the PCM was not involved with its operation or failure. Our problem was just an old fashion water pump coolant leak. After the repair we recommended the vehicle be returned to a Ford dealership for the 13S12 safety revisions.

With our Dodge Cummins, Dodge used a large electric cooling fan to regulate engine temperature. During heavy engine loads the large electric fan draws massive amounts of air through a radiator to dissipate engine heat. During lighter engine loads, the PCM decreases the fan blade speed and operation because there is

less heat to dissipate. Replacing the mechanically driven cooling fan with an electrically driven cooling fan reduces the amount of work being performed, energy consumed and thereby increases efficiency and fuel mileage. Vehicle engineers have turned to small electric motors to control many of the modern vehicle functions because they are light, reliable and can be programmed to operate in a more efficient manner.

Don't be surprised if soon even your vehicle's brake system becomes classified as an emission component. Non-hybrid vehicles will soon also use regenerative braking to convert the vehicle's kinetic energy into electrical energy to recharge the vehicle's 12-volt battery. That will decrease the load on the engine from the mechanically driven alternator.

California emissions and federal fuel mileage regulations are the driving forces for so much of today's automotive innovation and technology. There is no doubt the modern automobile is the most complex technology that most individuals interact with on a daily basis. For us, the automotive professionals, the new technology represents a future of on-going training and learning. The modern professional automotive technician attends more on-going training than any other industry professional that I'm aware of. OH! That's all for now. Gotta go! It's Saturday and I'm late for class.

As usual I'm looking for interesting and informative automotive topics to write about. If you have any suggestions, recommendations or general or specific questions about a personal vehicle, please TEXT 559-907-7661 and I will promptly reply.

God Bless America and God Bless 93636 Warren Parr

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This article originally appeared in the January 2019 issue of the Ranchos Independent.

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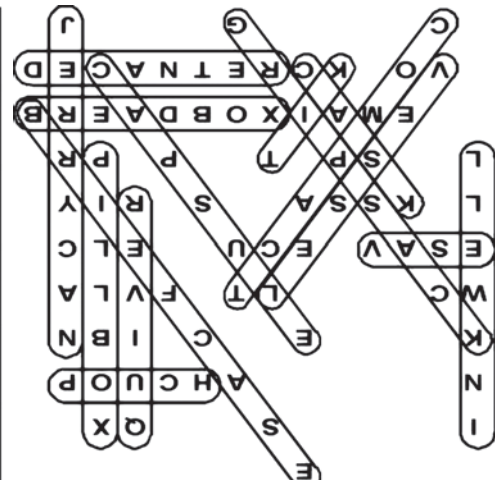
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ANSWERS

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STUDY cont. from P. 15

to take more cars off the road.

Safety is reported as one of the motivating factors for the SR 41 and Avenue 9 Sustainable Corridors Study, aiming at improving the safety for all pedestrians, cyclists and vehicular traffic along the corridors. The study proposes that "traffic calming" measures should be prioritized along this segment.

Supporting local businesses is the purpose of the "local economy" goal. It figures that it is essential to maintain the resiliency of Madera and Fresno Counties. By improving placemaking and public access to local businesses, they will be more equipped to adapt to future changes in technology trends or employment which might impact the local economy. The study will be actively engaging with local businesses for their input. For example, the northern segment of Highway 41 is a key corridor connecting communities to local businesses such as wineries and casinos in northern and eastern Madera. Engaging with these businesses to gather feedback on how improved connections to their businesses will help will also be prioritized. Likewise, Avenue 9's primary agriculture usage relies heavily on reliable connections and by improving connectivity and access to these local businesses, the study figures local farms can be ensured that essential equipment will arrive to them and that their products will be delivered to the public.

The final goal is "healthy and well." This goal aims to support active and healthy lifestyles in the communities surrounding Highway 41 and Avenue 9. The primary focus of this goal is eliminating harmful emissions and getting people to be more physically active. The study predicts there will also be opportunities to enhance urban

green spaces and community spaces located within the corridors which will foster "physical and social wellness." Areas along Highway 41 would have a proposed expanded bikeway and trail network.

Next Steps

Next is to seek and receive grant funding for the development of these transportation solutions in the future. As their literature reports: "The goals listed in this report will serve as a foundation for later project tasks including public outreach events and the identification and analysis of sustainable corridor management strategies and sustainable transportation improvements to be implemented along the study corridors."

The entire project is available at www.fresnocog.org/project/fresno-madera-state-route-41-and-avenue-9-sustainable-corridors-study/

SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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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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Tea Time

What Virginia Would See Today

By Betty Van Valkenburg

In 1897, eight-year-old Virginia Hanlon, dismayed by reports that there was no Santa Claus, asked her dad if Santa Claus was real. He suggested that she consult the local New York City newspaper, *The Sun*. She wrote to the newspaper: "Dear Editor, I am 8 years old. Some of my little friends say there is no Santa Claus. Papa says, 'If you see it in *The Sun*, it's so.' Please tell me the truth: Is there a Santa Claus?" *The Sun* printed a warmhearted reply, still enjoyed to this day, which stated: "Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus."

Oh, how times have changed since 1897. Let us count the ways:

1. Today's radicalized press might answer: "No, Virginia, there is no Santa Claus. He died of coronavirus and Donald Trump is to blame."

2. Big newspapers, where they still exist, are no longer (if they ever really were) reliable sources of information but are in most cases mere propaganda machines. And modern "news" sources taking their place are equally biased or outright censored.

3. In this era of coronavirus madness, Governor Newsom might ground Santa's sleigh; the elves might make face masks instead of toys; the radical environmentalists might ban Rudolph's lighted red nose; and Mrs. Claus, heeding Dr. Fauci's latest-and-greatest warning, might cancel the family Christmas dinner and send poor Santa to bed hungry. Bah, humbug!

Yes, Virginia, there was real voter fraud.

In the troubled year 2020, and now into 2021, a modern-day Virginia might be more dismayed by reports that cheating could have affected a presidential election than whether Santa will continue to bring Christmas gifts. She would have heard reports that dead people voted, that people who no longer lived in a state voted in that state, that vote-counting machines were rigged or prone to errors, that selected batches of ballots were run through counting machines two and three times, that mail-in ballots were found hither and yon even after the election (sometimes in batches equaling just the numbers needed to overcome a Republican lead), that some states illegally counted ballots arriving after the legal cut-off date, that some states refused to verify

signatures on mail-in ballot envelopes, that ballots in hidden suitcases were accessed and counted immediately after Republican poll watchers were sent home for the night, that Republican poll watchers were banned from actually "watching" the vote count, that the unprecedented numbers of mail-in ballots were mishandled, that ballot drop boxes were pilfered and that ballot harvesters turned in illegal ballots.

In some cases, today's Virginia might have witnessed the actual occurrences of malfeasance *in progress* on television newscasts. But were she to ask her local newspaper or Google if cheating in the election really occurred, the reply would be: "Of course not, Virginia. Nothing to see here."

"No, Toto, we're definitely not in Kansas anymore."

In the 1939 movie, *The Wizard of Oz*, a tornado swept Dorothy and her dog Toto from their farm in Kansas to the magical Land of Oz. They were separated from home, in a strange land ruled by a phony wizard hiding his true identity behind a curtain and threatened by the Wicked Witch of the West. A bewildered Dorothy told Toto, "I've a feeling we're not in Kansas anymore."

Today, there's fear in this country that, soon, we may not be in America anymore. Following the destructive tornado-like 2020 election, Americans may awake on January 21, 2021 to a scene eerily similar to the fictional land of Oz in which a feckless phony who's been hiding in his basement, rather than behind a curtain, is President of the United States of America and a "Wicked Witch" of San Francisco in the West (literary license taken) will take his place when he inevitably falters.

They've promised to transform America, and if given the chance, they will. Their plans outlined in the Democrat Party National Platform and candidates' promises insure new confiscatory taxes, increasing dangers of domestic violence and foreign intervention, new freedom- and prosperity-strangling regulations, skyrocketing crime rates resulting from "defunding" of police and elimination of criminal penalties, buy-back (confiscation) of firearms, imposing the Green "Raw" Deal, nationalizing healthcare and eliminating private insurance, late-term abortion on demand, open borders and, sadly, much more.

Unlike Dorothy in the movie, we won't be able to just close our eyes, click our heels three times, think "there's no place like home" and return to a semblance of normalcy.

As Tiny Tim said in *A Christmas Carol*, may "God bless us, every one." We could certainly use divine intervention.

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• Purchase New Year's celebration items that are on sale in January if you have a graduating senior in 2021. You can get all kinds of items for a fraction of the price, and you will be ready with all the 2021 things you need!

• Many people in South Korea opt to compress the remains of the dead person into gem-like beads in different colors, which are then displayed at home.

• Got a neckache? Grab a pair of long socks, fill each with 2 cups of uncooked white rice and a couple of drops of your favorite essential oil. Knot the sock tightly to seal. Microwave for up to 2 minutes, and test temperature before draping it over your shoulders to apply heat to sore muscles. It's so nice, especially when you're laying down.

• The oldest known customer service complaint was written on a clay cuneiform tablet in Mesopotamia 4,000 years ago. In it, a customer named Nanni complains that he was sold inferior copper ingots.

• J.P. in New Jersey advises that instead of using candles during a power outage -- it can be dangerous! -- try a battery-operated lantern instead. You can even use solar garden lights in a vase. You'd be surprised

how much they can light a room.

• Before battles, some Roman gladiators read product endorsements. The makers of the film "Gladiator" planned to show this but nixed the idea for fear that audiences wouldn't believe it.

• "To trick yourself into saving money, round up purchases when you enter them into your checkbook register." -- S.W. in Arkansas

• "If you're storing clothes in a storage tote, put a sheet of fabric softener in as well. It can help repel bugs and keep the fabrics smelling fresh." -- M.W. in Iowa

• A person with geomelophobia has the urge to eat raw potatoes.

• "Spray nonwashable plush toys with dry shampoo to clean and freshen them. Rub vigorously with a terry cloth to remove any extra residue and fluff up!" -- P.H. in Pennsylvania

• Late in his life, Guglielmo Marconi believed no sound ever dies completely. He dreamed of building a device strong enough to pick up the actual words of Jesus at the "Sermon on the Mount."

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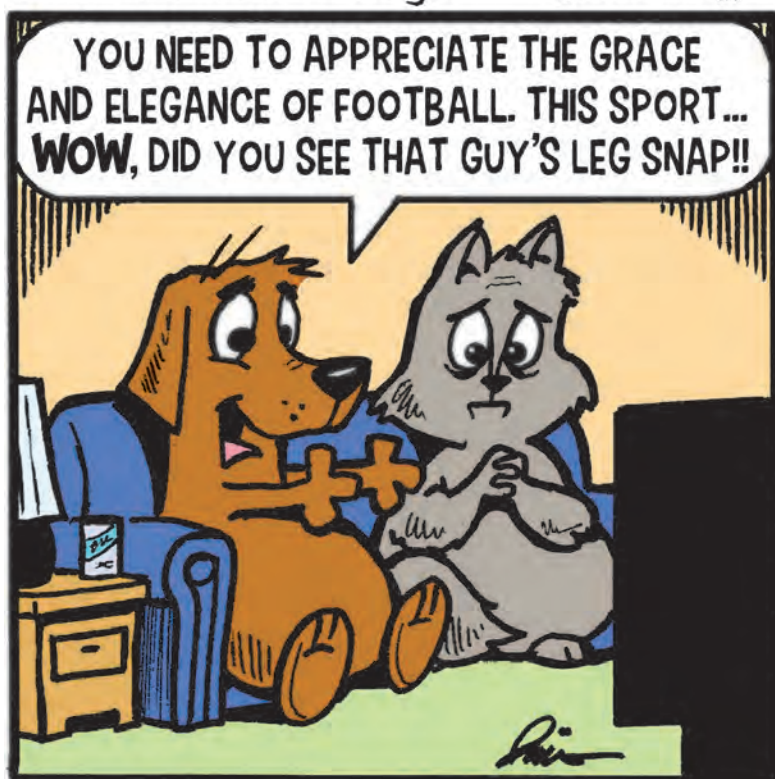
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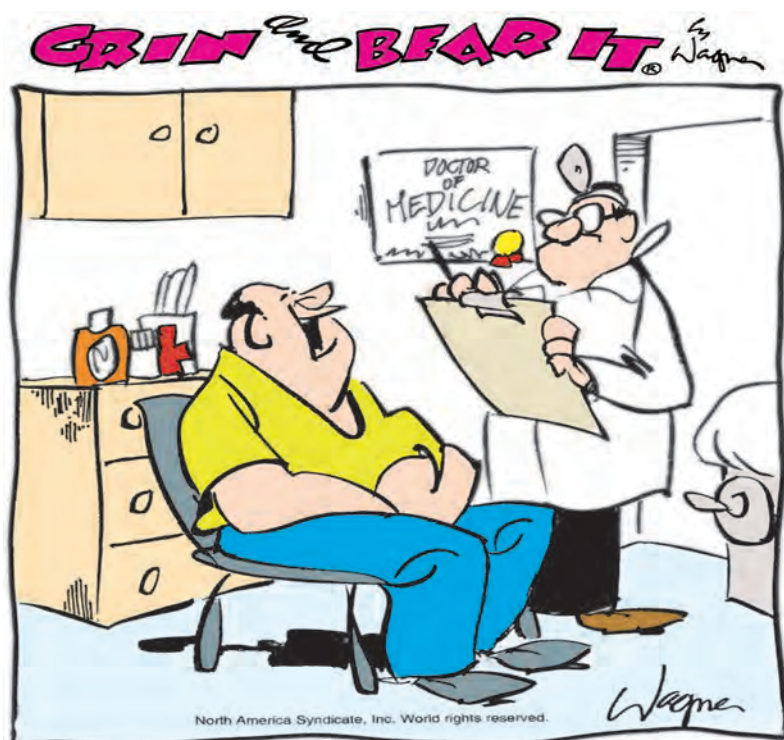
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"I've already made all my New Year's resolutions, Doc ... I'll have to wait 'til next year to lose weight."



ARIES (March 21 to April 19) Aspects call for care in preparing material for submission. Although you might find it bothersome to go over what you've done, the fact is, rechecking could be worth your time and effort.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20) The week is favorable for Bovines who welcome change. New career opportunities wait to be checked out. You also might want to get started on that home makeover you've been considering.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20) You might have to be extra careful to protect that surprise you have planned, thanks to a certain snoopy someone who wants to know more about your plans than you're willing to share.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22) Family ties are strong this week, although an old and still-unresolved problem might create some unpleasant moments. If so, look to straighten the situation out once and for all.

LEO (July 23 to August 22) Although the Lion might see it as an act of loyalty and courage to hold on to an increasingly shaky position, it might be wiser to make changes now to prevent a possible meltdown later.

VIRGO (August 23 to September 22) Your gift for adding new people to your circle of friends works overtime this week, thanks largely to contacts you made during the holidays. A surprise awaits you at the week's end.

LIBRA (September 23 to October 22) Don't hide your talents. It's a good time to show what you can do to impress people who can do a lot for you. A dispute with a family member might still need some smoothing over.

SCORPIO (October 23 to November 21) Be open with your colleagues about your plan to bring a workplace matter out into the open. You'll want their support, and they'll want to know how you'll pull it off.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22 to December 21) Trying to patch up an unraveling relationship is often easier said than done. But it helps to discuss and work out any problems that arise along the way.

CAPRICORN (December 22 to January 19) While your creative aspect remains high this week, you might want to call on your practical side to help work out the why and wherefore of an upcoming decision.

AQUARIUS (January 20 to February 18) Dealing with someone's disappointment can be difficult for Aquarians, who always try to avoid giving pain. But a full explanation and a show of sympathy can work wonders.

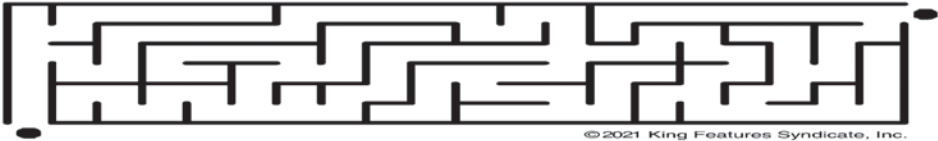
PISCES (February 19 to March 20) Getting a job-related matter past some major obstacles should be easier this week. A personal situation might take a surprising but not necessarily unwelcome turn by the week's end.

Born this Week

You can be both a dreamer and a doer. You consider helping others to be an important part of your life.

FUN PAGES

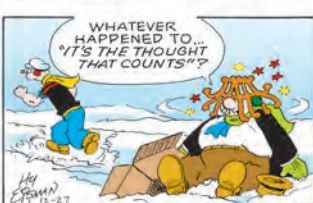
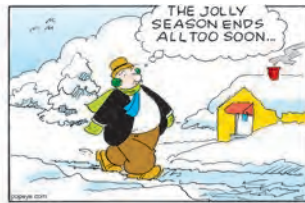
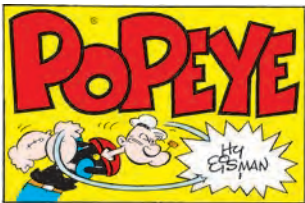
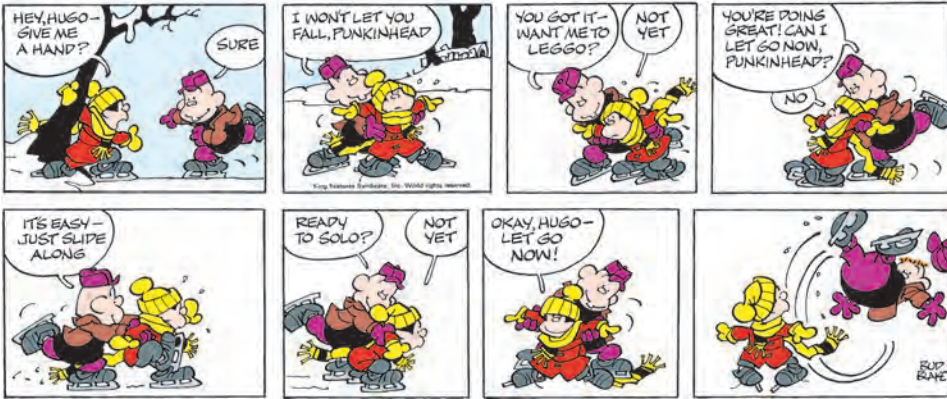
Kids' Maze



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TIGER

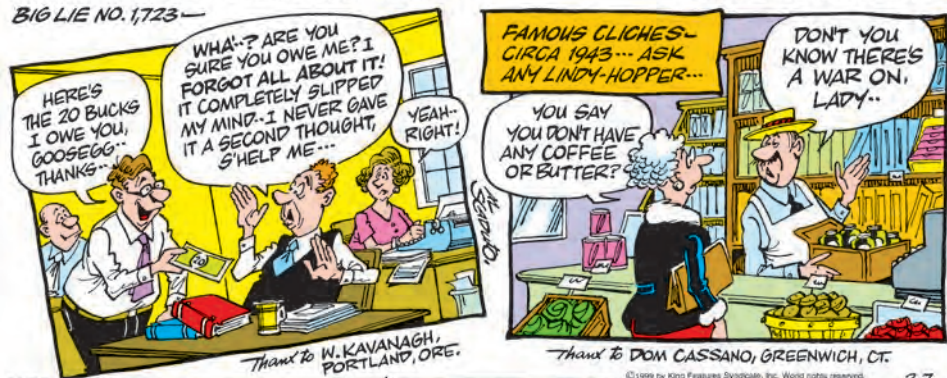
BY BUD BLAKE



THEY'LL DO IT EVERY TIME

BIG LIE NO. 1723

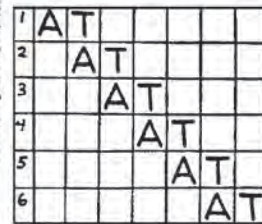
BY AL SCADUTO



ALLEY OOPS! Which path does the bowling ball take to hit the pins above? Pick 1, 2, 3 or 4, and see if you are right.

Junior Whirl

by Hal Kaufman



WHERE IT'S AT SPORTS-WISE

KNOW where it's AT in sporting terms? Let's see. Each of the six stepped-off AT teams at left has a sports connotation. See if you can puzzle terms out in accord with the following definitions:

1. Sports figure.
2. Pitcher-catcher duo.
3. Nonprofessional.
4. Boat race.
5. Wins out over foe.
6. Stadium location (two words).

Time limit: Two minutes.
1. Athlete, 2. Batter, 3. Amateur, 4. Hogata, 5. Defeat, 6. Box seat.

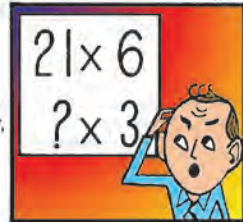
ZIP-ITTY DOI ZIP codes were introduced by the U.S. Postal Service in 1963. What do the letters ZIP stand for?
Zoning Improvement Plan.

VERSE OFF! From a number that's odd, cut off the head. It then will even be. Next, we say, cut off the tail. A time of day, you'll see. What number applies in this odd verse?
(Seven (even, eve).)

FUN TIMES! Multiply 21 by 6 and the answer is 126, an instance in which all three digits used in the multiplication appear in the product. Just for fun, see if you can find another two-digit amount, which, when multiplied by 3, will function similarly. That is to say, will produce a product containing the three digits involved in the math.

P.S.: Complying amount is over 50.

Fifty-one will do it: 51 times 3 equals 153.



Wishing Well

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2	3	2	3	6	3	7	6	3	6	2	3	2
I	R	Z	I	U	V	S	T	E	H	E	S	D

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

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MAGIC MAZE ● CONTAINERS

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

Find the listed words in the diagram. They run in all directions forward, backward, up, down and diagonally. Unlisted clue hint: SUSPENDED FROM A NECKLACE

- Breadbox
- Briefcase
- Capsule
- Cask
- Compact
- Decanter
- Gripsack
- Inkwell
- Jerry can
- Kit
- Pillbox
- Pouch
- Quiver
- Vase
- Vessel

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TRIVIA TEST

By Fifi Rodriguez

1. U.S. PRESIDENTS: The poem "O Captain! My Captain!" was written after the death of which president?
2. GENERAL KNOWLEDGE: What is the weight of a U.S. quarter?
3. MOVIES: What was the name of the skyscraper in the drama "Die Hard"?
4. TELEVISION: What city was the setting for the sitcom "Mork and Mindy"?
5. SCIENCE: What is the study of knowledge, reality and existence called?
6. ANIMAL KINGDOM: What are male blue crabs called?
7. GEOGRAPHY: What is the highest point in Japan?
8. FOOD & DRINK: The acai berry is native to which continent?
9. LITERATURE: Who wrote the "Winnie-the-Pooh" book series for children?
10. MEASUREMENTS: What is an angstrom?

Answers

1. Abraham Lincoln
2. 0.2 ounces
3. Nakatomi Plaza
4. Boulder, Colorado
5. Philosophy
6. Jimnies
7. Mount Fuji
8. South America
9. A.A. Milne
10. One ten-billionth of a meter, used to measure very small distances

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Click on "Local News" at

Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps



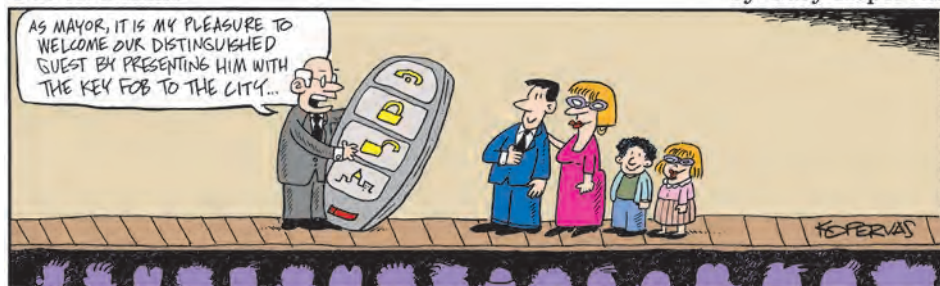
R.F.D.

by Mike Marland



Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas



The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



Intelligent Life

by David Reddick



HOCUS-FOCUS

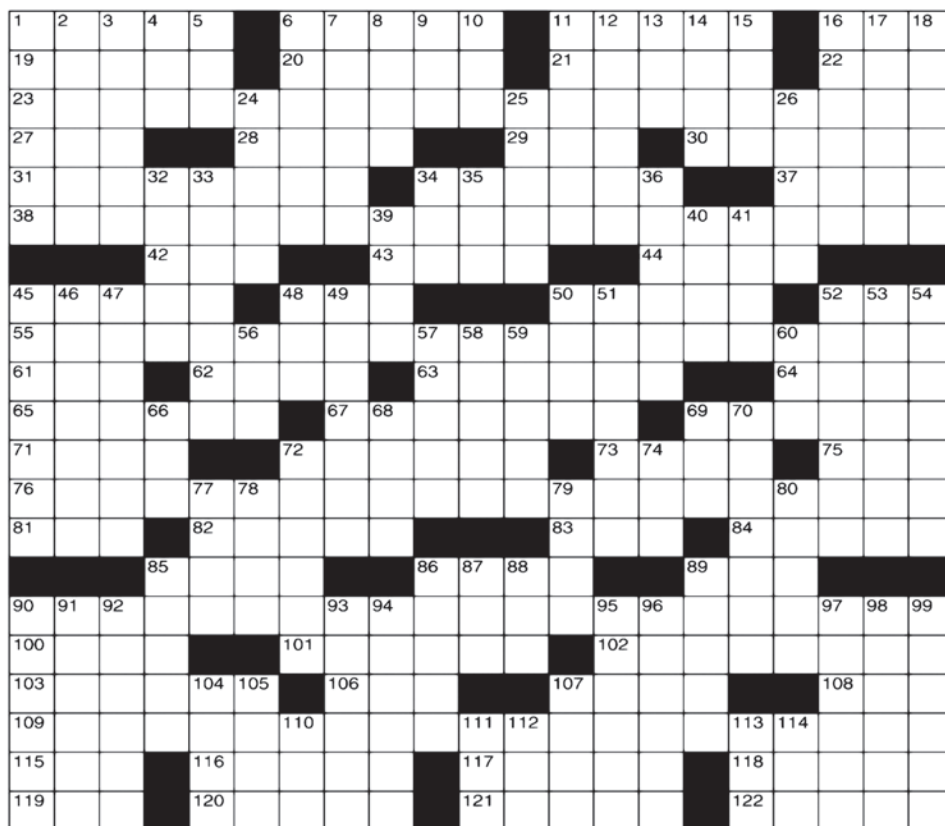
BY HENRY BOLTINOFF

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Find at least six differences in details between panels. Differences: 1. Pans are missing. 2. Cap is reversed. 3. Arm is moved. 4. Handle is shorter. 5. Neckline is different. 6. Paper is moved.

Super Crossword



- ACROSS**
- 1 Alcatraz Island locale, for short
 - 6 Info-filled
 - 11 Subjective paper pieces
 - 16 Yeshiva student, e.g.
 - 19 Land, in Italy
 - 20 Fast Amtrak service
 - 21 Salsa singer Cruz
 - 22 Pal, in Nice
 - 23 Concerning the effects of drugs on the mind
 - 27 Maestro —Pekka Salonen
 - 28 12:00, half of the time
 - 29 South, in Spanish
 - 30 Flinch in fear
 - 31 Squid feature
 - 34 "Chill out!"
 - 37 Amply skilled
 - 38 Belief in a national power structure
 - 42 Acting signal
 - 43 Blarney Stone's land
 - 44 "Sometimes you feel like —"
 - 45 Get moving
 - 48 Org. for tooth drillers
 - 50 Lid
 - 52 Bullfight yell
 - 55 Official endorsement via an amendment, say
 - 61 Savings acct. addition
 - 62 Days before holidays
 - 63 Rises
 - 64 Heaps
 - 65 Ornamental hairnets
 - 67 Jogged
 - 69 — Pointe, Michigan
 - 71 Gazpacho, e.g., in Spanish
 - 72 Talisman
 - 73 Cookie for 100+ years
 - 75 He's a doll
 - 76 Ear, nose and throat doctor
 - 81 B-ball official
 - 82 Sneak off to say "I do"
 - 83 The same: Prefix
 - 84 — Carlo
 - 85 Street — (popular acceptance)
 - 86 Video file format, in brief
 - 89 Wrestling win
 - 90 Quality among identical things
 - 100 TV's Griffin
 - 101 Oaths
 - 102 Swiss city on Lake Geneva
 - 103 Shelling out
 - 106 Moo goo — pan
 - 107 Short comic sketch
 - 108 Fist bump, colloquially
 - 109 Machine for a brain test
 - 115 Palme — (film award)
 - 116 Coiled
 - 117 Sprightly
 - 118 China's Zhou
 - 119 Mil. officer
 - 120 Taunts in fun
 - 121 Swift
 - 122 Nation south of Sicily
 - 6 Port southeast of Roma
 - 7 Canyon comebacks
 - 8 Stop nursing
 - 9 35mm camera type
 - 10 Thanksgiving staple
 - 11 Like mystical practices
 - 12 City in Illinois
 - 13 Added wing
 - 14 Fashionable Christian
 - 15 Stuffing herb
 - 16 "I, Claudius" star Derek
 - 17 PC-to-PC letters
 - 18 Actor Dafoe
 - 24 Aunt's spouse, in Paris
 - 25 Unified
 - 26 "Sorry, already have plans"
 - 32 Cantina snacks
 - 33 Bordered on
 - 34 Roman 901
 - 35 Above, in verse
 - 36 Country crooner Randy
 - 39 Fire output
 - 40 Mother of Don Juan
 - 41 Magical glow
 - 45 Clip out, as a coupon
 - 46 Imply in its definition
 - 47 In addition to
 - 48 Gorged on
 - 49 Fluffy floor-cleaning tool
 - 50 Walking aid
 - 51 They can't be taught new tricks, in a saying
 - 52 Raincoat material
 - 53 Most baggy
 - 54 Pact among nations
 - 56 ER hookups
 - 57 Bit of land in l'oceano
 - 58 Mink relative
 - 59 In smart garb
 - 60 Eastern spiritual path
 - 66 Crew tool
 - 68 Precept
 - 69 Salon goop
 - 70 Suitemates, say
 - 72 Like one of a battery's terminals
 - 74 Pal of Piglet
 - 77 That girl's
 - 78 "How did — this happen?"
 - 79 Close by
 - 80 Fixin' to
 - 85 Longtime
 - 86 Rock or jazz
 - 87 Thanksgiving staple
 - 88 Suffix with host or lion
 - 89 Mickey's dog
 - 90 Obstruct
 - 91 Kevin of "Aliens in the Attic"
 - 92 Maytag products
 - 93 Rocker Ted
 - 94 Big pianos
 - 95 High-pH substance
 - 96 Skipped out (on)
 - 97 Ultimate purpose
 - 98 Be short with
 - 99 Old compact Kia model
 - 104 Abbr. on a food carton
 - 105 Escalate
 - 107 Clipper, e.g.
 - 110 "Sure," in Soissons
 - 111 Pointy part of Mr. Spock
 - 112 Links gp.
 - 113 Ruby or onyx
 - 114 Stuff in some viral genes
- DOWN**
- 1 Fla. Gulf city
 - 2 Admits guilt, with "up"
 - 3 Kobe of hoops
 - 4 Curved path
 - 5 "Boo- —!" ("All right!")

SEM CU

south east madera county united

It is not hope, but “certainty” that things will get better for us all.

Wounds will heal as time passes. Remember the good times and bring them back. Share them with family and friends as often as you can and take solace in the fact that humanity is here to stay and thrive. It is not always easy, but this is the time to be kinder, more accepting, forgiving and more loving.

May you all have a HEALTHY and HAPPY NEW YEAR

Until further notice, the regular SEMCU meetings will take place via teleconference.

Our next meeting is Monday, Feb. 15 at 6 p.m.

The teleconference number is 312-757-3121

and the Access Code is 715-657-949.

Please let us know if you have any questions.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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