

The Ranchos Independent



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The Official Publication of Southeastern Madera County

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Madera County Throwing the Ranchos for a "Loop"?

By Randy Bailey

A meeting was held Tuesday, Nov. 20 at the Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce to discuss future proposed Madera County roadway projects. Specifically, the small offices of the Chamber were filled to overflowing because the key roadway project being discussed was the possibility of building a bypass "loop" that would run to the south of the Ranchos along the irrigation canal near Avenue 11. In a room with Madera County Resource Management Agency (RMA) Planner Matt Treber and Charly Clouse of TPG Consulting were Chamber members and Ranchos business members from all up and down Avenue 12, listening to descriptions of proposed roadway alternatives for both Avenue 12 and Avenue 9.

As a result of the development of Gateway Village at Avenue 12 and Highway 41, and general increases in traffic through the Ranchos both to and from Fresno and Madera, Madera County has entered into a process to plan for future improvements to county roadways, including Avenue 12 through the Madera Ranchos. The RMA has determined that ultimately, Avenue 12 will need to be widened to at least four continuous lanes from Highway 41 to Highway 99. According to Treber - and echoed by Clouse - the County could begin expanding Avenue 12 to four lanes

any time they wanted since they already possess the necessary right-of-way easements.

But at a recent Chamber meeting, RMA Director Ray Beach asserted that he wanted the decisions for Avenue 12 to come from the community. He stressed that the County was not interested in "business as usual" where they

Fortunately for us, the county is seeking community input before any firm planning process takes place. Now is the time to provide your input and share your concerns.

would just show up one day with road graders and do what they wanted.

Alternatives presented for the portion of Avenue 12 through the Ranchos would be to either widen and construct four lanes through the middle of town, or leave the road in its current two-lane configuration and provide a four-lane bypass around the Ranchos to the south.

Responses from business people at the meeting were mixed. Some thought moving the faster-moving traffic out of town to the south would allow for easier

access to restaurants and shops on Avenue 12. Most others, however, thought that a loop would turn the Ranchos into a desert. The desert town of Mojave, Calif. was given as an example of how moving a main road destroyed a community.

The impetus for the meeting was news that the Madera County Planning Commission had scheduled at its meeting the same night to vote on amending the County's General Plan to change the designation of both Avenues 12 and 9 as "... limited expressways, and to limit future access to those roadways."

Either alternative should be studied and evaluated by members of the Ranchos community before a consensus recommendation is forwarded to the county for consideration. Fortunately for us, the county is seeking community input before any firm planning process takes place. **Now is the time to provide your input and share your concerns.**

The Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce will be hosting a townhall meeting on Wednesday evening, Feb. 6, at 7 p.m. The location of the meeting will either be Liberty High School or the Ranchos/Hills Seniors Center. Look for updates in the Ranchos Independent for the location and time.

This will be your first and best opportunity to voice your opinion! Please make sure that your voice is heard *before* the final planning takes place.



Who Took Diane Felix's Life?

By Randy Bailey and Mayra Miranda

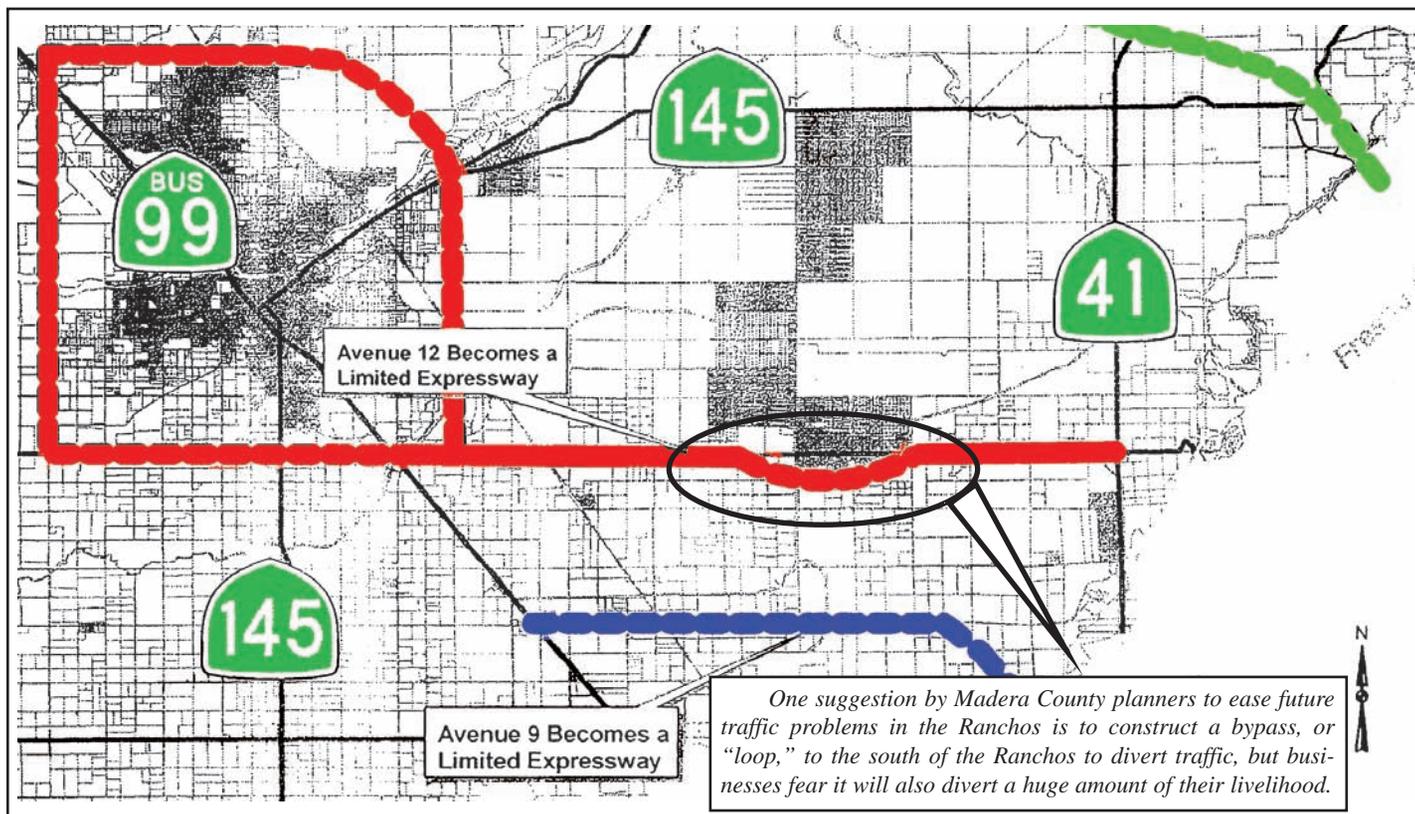
On Saturday, Nov. 3 at about 4 o'clock in the afternoon, Diane Felix had a lot on her mind as she drove westbound on Avenue 12. She was on her way to pick up her 13-year-old daughter, Patty, to go pay her respects to a relative that had just recently passed away. Suddenly, right around Road 33 1/2, there was an oncoming car in her lane. Diane swerved onto the shoulder to try and avoid the car and then pulled back onto the road after the car had passed but overcorrected. In a horrific split second, her blue Honda Civic traveling at approximately 60 miles per hour collided head on with a brown Nissan Titan pickup traveling at an equal speed.

Diane Felix was dead - but it wasn't the Nissan that that had caused the accident.

California Highway Patrol records indicate that there was a third car that had traveled into Diane Felix's lane, caused her to swerve and then drove off into the East without a scratch as the accident unfolded.

The third vehicle has yet to be identified and, according to the CHP, is going to be next to impossible to identify because it made no contact with the other vehicles, leaving no evidence. But it was this third vehicle that swerved into the westbound lane directly into the path of Diane Felix.

According to the CHP, the majority of the witnesses have identified the third car involved as a dark blue SUV. Witnesses were not able to get a description of the driver or of the license plate and the investigation is still ongoing as the CHP waits for witnesses to come forward, as well as anyone who might have any information pertaining to the accident. If you have any information please call Officer Mike Reynolds or Tim McKown at 675-1025.



Grand Jury Finds “Major Problem” with Supe’s Water Commission; *Immediate* Removal Sought

By Randy Bailey

The 2007-2008 Madera County Grand Jury has issued its third final report of the year entitled “Madera County Water Advisory Commission” and has found a major problem with the Board of Supervisors’ selection of appointees for the Madera County Water Advisory Commission (MCWAC).

On Aug. 21, 2007, the Board of Supervisors approved specific criteria requiring qualified candidates to be appointed to the five-member MCWAC representing each of the five Madera County supervisorial districts. According to the Grand Jury findings, the appointee requirements were ignored by four of the five supervisors. As a result, the Grand Jury has recommended that the appropriate district supervisors *immediately* remove each unqualified appointee and then create a search committee to identify and recruit fully qualified appointees to the MCWAC. The Grand Jury further recommended that the Board of Supervisors welcome the participation of citizen action groups (stakeholders) in discussion of vital water management issues, and that the Board proceed with the presentation of the fact-based Integrated Regional Water Management Plan (IRWMP) according to schedule. The full text of the Grand Jury’s findings are presented here:

MADERA COUNTY WATER ADVISORY COMMISSION

Introduction

A new Water Commission has been formed in Madera County by the Madera County Board of Supervisors. The Grand Jury has identified a problem with the Madera County Board of Supervisors approval of appointees for the Madera County Water Advisory Commission (MCWAC). These appointments are in violation of Ordinance 383D, Resolution No. 2007-193, which resolution was approved in a four-to-one vote of the Board of Supervisors. Criteria established on Aug. 21, 2007 to appoint *qualified* candidates to the five-member MCWAC representing each of the five Madera County supervisorial districts was ignored by four of the five supervisors. A “commission” is a policy-setting body, as opposed to an “advisory board” only authorized to make recommendations. Since decisions made by this Commission will have consequences that affect Madera County for decades to come, it is imperative that we have the most qualified appointees on the

Madera County Water Advisory Commission.

Findings

A. In 2005, Madera County obtained two grants totaling \$770,000 from the California Department of Water Resources. The funds from this grant were to produce a plan called the Integrated Regional Water Management Plan (IRWMP) for Madera County. Because this plan must accommodate the needs of the Valley Floor, as well as the needs of Eastern Madera County, special attention must be paid to the policies, agreements, regulations, and practices emerging from the IRWMP to enable the plan to serve the diverse water needs of all county communities. The integration, regionalization and technical aspects of the planning process were designed to:

1. Create a Water Management Plan for Madera County that will become the framework for the policies and practices designed to balance the demand for and supply of water in Madera County.

2. Create a set of projects designed to implement Water Management over the next five years. These projects will be described in terms of their contribution to water management objectives, their cost, duration, and priority of importance. Taken together, these projects will result in the infrastructure that will support the county-wide water management effort.

3. Develop a set of criteria for evaluating the results of implementing each project and mechanisms for “mid-course” corrections when necessary.

4. Provide Madera County government with the information and tools necessary to manage water under their jurisdiction.

B. On Aug. 21, 2007, the Board of Supervisors established the following Mission Statement for the MCWAC in Resolution No. 2007-193:

“It is the mission of the Madera County Water Advisory Commission to investigate, discuss and recommend water policies to the Madera County Board of Supervisors and Madera County Flood Control and Water Conservation Agency/Board of Directors to ensure a consistent and healthy supply of water within the County of Madera for all residential, agricultural, commercial, industrial and recreational needs, and to further responsible and effective flood control operations.”

C. The Board of Supervisors established the following Policy Statement for the MCWAC in Resolution No. 2007-193:

“It is the policy of the Madera County Water Advisory Commission to fully explore the efficient and healthy uses of the limited water supplies in the County of Madera. To listen to all who come before the Commission and to formulate advice regarding water matters before the Board of Supervisors and Agency Board so as to provide unbiased environmentally sound recommendations which will assist both Boards to make fully informed decisions regarding water and flood control matters for specific and general projects.”

D. The Board of Supervisors established the following qualifications for appointment as a Water Commissioner in Resolution No. 2007-193:

“To ensure that the mission and policies of the Madera County Water Commission are met, it is necessary that appointed Commissioners be qualified to fully discuss and understand the various scientific, environmental, legal, political and social aspects of water issues which will come before the Commission for consideration. Therefore, at a minimum, members of the Commission must have the following qualifications:

1. *Demonstrated employment or education in water issues This may be satisfied by a showing of employment within a water agency, water district, canal district or employment as a water contractor, water attorney, or consultant. The education may be demonstrated by evidence of extensive course work in recognized institutions or sponsored water seminar on water issues in California. The employment and educational experience may be considered separately or jointly so as to show a level of experience or knowledge in water issues which allow the member to fully participate in Commission discussions.*

2. *Political Experience. Political experience may demonstrate the necessary qualifications for membership on the Commission, depending on length of service and the relationship of that service to California water issues. An example of political qualifications are an elected membership to the board of directors for a water district and service on said board for a period of time which would demonstrate an understanding of water issues.*

3. *Lay Experience. A person who by way of interest or necessity due to work or other experience has a demonstrated knowledge of water issues will qualify for membership on the Commission. An exam-*

Please see **WATER** on P. 13

Top Educator Visits GVUSD

Dr. Anthony Monreal, Deputy Superintendent for the Curriculum and Instruction Branch for the State of California visited Golden Valley Unified School District on Friday, Nov. 9 at 9 a.m. and met with school officials and visited some of the schools within the District.

As a part of his visit, Dr. Monreal toured Sierra View Elementary School, Liberty High School, Valley Teen Ranch Community Day School and the Home Hospital School at Children’s Hospital. The focus of his visit was to view needs of the Home Hospital School and make suggestions on how to best utilize funding sources.

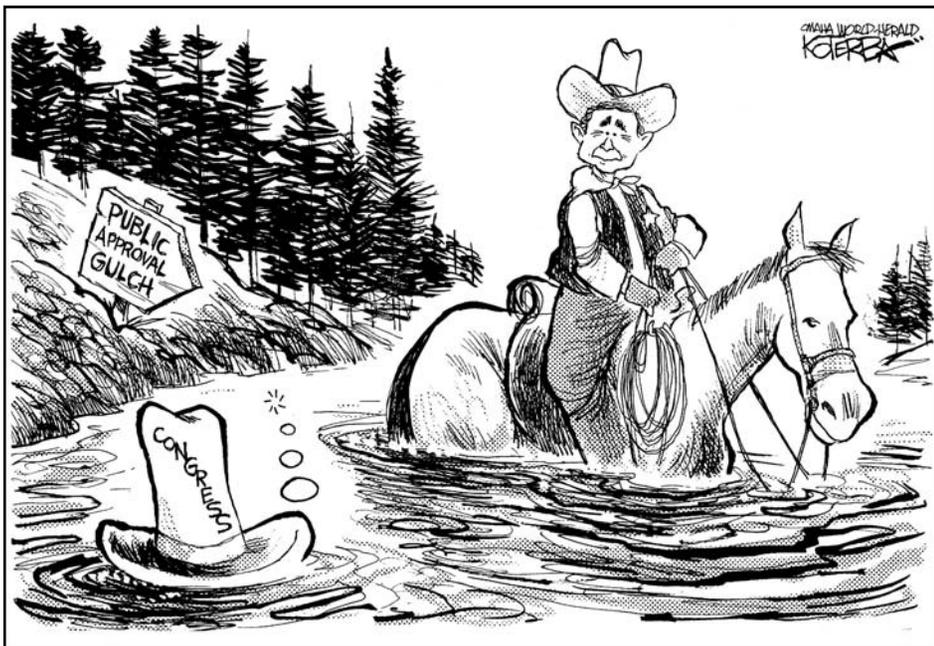
Dr. Anthony Monreal is the Deputy Superintendent for the Curriculum and Instruction Branch. He oversees eight divisions that encompass the full continuum of education and related services in California public schools. The work of these divisions impacts individuals from early childhood to older adulthood.

Dr. Monreal serves as the Immediate Past President of the California Association of Latino Superintendents and Administrators. He also serves as a member of the state Federated Council of the California Interscholastic Federation, representing the Superintendents Council of the Association of California School Administrators. Prior to being appointed Deputy Superintendent by Superintendent of Public Instruction Jack O’Connell, Dr. Monreal served as the Superintendent of the Selma Unified School District from 2003 to 2007. He also previously served as Superintendent of the Wasco Union High School District from 1999 to 2003. Dr. Monreal possesses over 18 years of experience as an educator, serving as a teacher, counselor, assistant principal and principal at both the elementary and high school levels, as well as superintendent.

Dr. Monreal has an array of experience working in and with California public schools in the heart of our state’s Central Valley and we looked forward to him visiting Golden Valley Unified School District.



Dr. Anthony Monreal, (center) visits instructor Tim Hays’ LHS computer class as Superintendent Sarah Koligian looks on.



Guest Editorial

Being Thankful at Thanksgiving

By Pastor Karl Roth, Flipside Church

Thanksgiving is designed to be a time of giving thanks. In 1789 President George Washington issued the first “Thanksgiving Day Proclamation.” He said, “Now, therefore, I do recommend and assign Thursday, the 26 day of November next, to be devoted by the people of these states to the service of that great and glorious Being, who is the Beneficent Author of all the good that was, that is, or that will be.” Thanksgiving is designed to provide us with a time to remember God’s goodness and thank Him for it.

However, because I live in the Ranchos and am part of our community, I know our community has been through a lot of pain and turmoil this last year. Perhaps not more so than other years but it seems that there has been a great deal of loss lately. How can we, in the midst of painful events and memories, thank God? Sometimes giving thanks is difficult at thanksgiving.

One Bible verse in particular gives me insight and instruction on how to thank God even in difficulty. 1 Thessalonians 5:18 says, “Give thanks in all circumstances for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.” (GNB)

I’ve heard this verse misunderstood far too often. Please notice, God’s instruction is not to give thanks “for” all circumstances. God says to give thanks “in” all circumstances. We wouldn’t think of giving thanks for evil in the world. When our children or

loved ones die we don’t give thanks for that. When our spouse becomes ill we wouldn’t necessarily be thankful. The Bible does not say to be thankful for evil, but the Bible does teach us, no matter how bad circumstances appear at the moment, to give thanks to God because: 1) God and His plan are bigger than my problem; 2) God will give me everything I need to make it through the “valley of the shadow of death”; and 3) I know God is developing my character which is the only thing I’ll take with me into eternity (God cares much more about our character than our comfort).

I may not be thankful “for” evil, but I can be thankful despite evil.

How can we be thankful when we’ve hit those “shadows of death” – when we’ve lost our job, lost a loved one, ended a relationship, or are lonely? Don’t look at what you’ve lost, but rather consider what you still have.

Here’s the question: what are you taking for granted right now? Your health? Your freedom? The relationships you still have? A roof over your head? The safety and health of your family? The little income you still have? There is a really old church song whose lyrics go like this: “Count your blessings, name them one by one. Count your many blessings, see what God has done.” That’s a really old-school church song but it holds a lot of truth. Sometimes, especially during difficulty, we need to stop and count our blessings.

Becoming a grateful person can be the healthiest thing you could do in your life this year. I heard someone say, “Love isn’t the healthiest emotion out there – gratitude is.” I agree. Actually, when you are thankful despite your circumstances, you are more resistant to illness and stress. Plus, there is no way you will ever find God’s plan and purpose for your life when you are ungrateful.

Undoubtedly this holiday season will be very difficult for some. I don’t want to trivialize loss. It is good and healthy to grieve for a season. But there is always another season we must move toward. During this Thanksgiving season pause a moment and remember the blessings you still have in your life. As you remember them, you will develop what I call “an attitude of gratitude.” That attitude of gratitude can make all the difference in life, and can flip a sad, hurting heart upside down.

Blessings, Pastor Karl

The Ranchos Independent

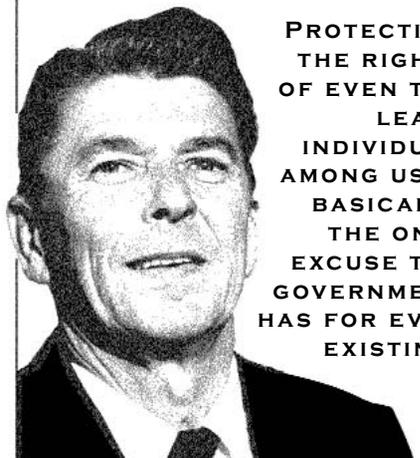
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THE RAY GUN
 SHOOTING STRAIGHT TO THE HEART



PROTECTING THE RIGHTS OF EVEN THE LEAST INDIVIDUAL AMONG US IS BASICALLY THE ONLY EXCUSE THE GOVERNMENT HAS FOR EVEN EXISTING.

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

Random Notes

It's that time of year! One hundred degree days seem like they were a lifetime ago and it's now time for Thanksgiving and then Christmas. I can't wait.

Speaking of Christmas, on Friday, Nov. 30 the Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce will present its annual Christmas tree lighting at Maywood Center. There will be Christmas carols sung by the local Girl Scouts and Flipside church, cookies and beverages, and stars on the Christmas tree that you can take to "adopt" a veteran at the V.A. hospital and make his or her Christmas a little brighter. This year our "grand marshal" is going to be 1997 Veteran of the Year, Jerry Payne. Jerry has got a ton of great stories to tell and he lives here in the Ranchos. Make sure you say "hi" to him that night. And of course, the guest of honor will be the 'ol jolly one himself, Santa Claus. He will be arriving on the next best thing to a sleigh and a bunch of reindeer - a fire engine! The festivities will begin at 6:30 p.m. and it's rated "G" for "great!"

If you're looking for something a little different for that next party or event, there's a local group of folks that call themselves the San Joaquin Gunslingers. They dress up in old west clothing and use correct-era Colts and shoot .45 and .38 caliber blanks.

These guys have won awards at the Clovis Rodeo Parade, the Kerman Harvest Festival and even our own Flatlander's Day Parade. If you want to give your next gala a "bang," give these guys a call. They've even got horses, saloon girls and a lot of fun. You can call Vic at 645-8514 or Diana at 645-0543. Yeehaw!

While we're on the topic of yearly visitors, you know what visits us every year just about this time? Can you say fog? As sure as I'm sitting here and God makes little green apples, the fog is coming. And as we've already been reminded on

Highway 99 on Nov. 3 just south of Fresno, a little fog can result in 108 vehicles slamming into each other and fatalities left and right. The California Highway Patrol has sent out its yearly fog driving tips and they're all worth remembering: 1) Drive with your headlights on "low." High beams reflect back and blind you. 2) SLOW DOWN!!! Enough said. 3) Listen for traffic you can't see. 4) Avoid passing. BE PATIENT! 5) Unless it's absolutely unavoidable, don't STOP on the freeway. 6) Consider postponing your trip until AFTER the fog clears (you know ... like in *June*).

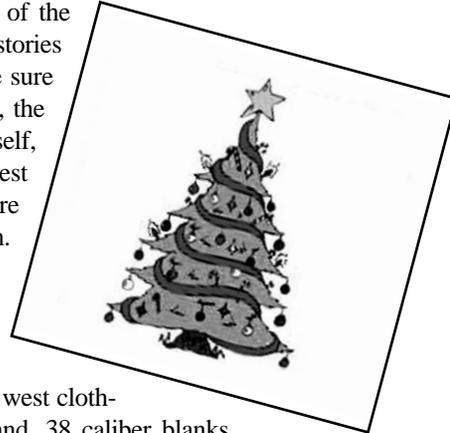
Follow these rules and you'll be around to get some tips on how to drive in 110 degree weather.

Christmas is coming to the Ranchos/Hills Senior Center so go check out their Christmas Boutique at the Senior Center at 37330 Berkshire Drive. They've got homemade jellies, pickles, baked goods, candies, Christmas breads, tote bags and a whole lot of other decorative Christmas items. Their opening day will be Friday, Nov. 23 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. then Saturday, Nov. 24 from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m., and on Saturdays Dec. 1, 8 and 15 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. This is their first Christmas Boutique but everything else they do is first class so it should be awesome.

I got so much positive feedback from Woody Laughnan's "Olde Cowboy" column in last month's Ranchos Independent. He talked about his last moments with his beloved wife as she succumbed to cancer. One reader came into my office with tears streaming down her face after she read it. Another reader, Jerry Holmes of the Ranchos, wanted me to re-run the column. He wrote, "Awesome, awesome, awesome! I stand amazed. How does a man put in words his love for a woman, his wife? I've lived a long time on this old Earth and have never before read such soul-touching words. Wives everywhere, please forgive us men (husbands) for not being able to express these same sentiments to each and every one of you. Maybe we just weren't taught how. My prayer is that I find the knowledge and the way to tell my wife these same feelings before her final day on this old Earth. What God has joined together, let no man - or *thing* - tear asunder. I am truly blessed because I also have an angel like the one Mr. Laughnan described in his article. My wife is truly a gift from God. May I join him in stating that, along with him, we may be the two luckiest guys on the face of the Earth."

He said, "... My prayer is that I find the knowledge and the way to tell my wife these same feelings before her final day on this old Earth ..."

I think he just did.



THE D.O.G. HOUSE

DEMAND OPEN GOVERNMENT BY DALE DROZEN



A Special Report on Special Districts

For many years Madera County has been using the general fund to subsidize the operation of County managed special Districts. It might be an issue the Grand Jury should look into but how and why it happened is not nearly as important to me as stopping it from continuing.

What is a special district? Here's an off the wall example: Special districts can be formed for almost any purpose. To provide a service that the county or city does not provide to the general population. I can get together with 20 (or any other number) of my neighbors and form a special district to have our lawns mowed. We have the choice of doing it as a collective effort (every week a different two neighbors mow all of the lawns); we can hire a lawn maintenance company to do it all and just pay them what we are billed; OR we can just contract with the County Special Districts Department and pay them what it costs the county to provide the service.

In the collective situation if you don't take your turns at mowing, your neighbors will probably skip your lawn when it's their turn to mow. In the case of the hired company, if you don't pay, they will stop working and take you to court to get their back pay. But in the case of the County, they have just continued providing the service without payment in full. Now, the rest of the cost of the service needs to come from someplace so they just show the Special Districts Department operating at a loss - well over a half million dollars last year.

Vote to pass the budget and it is a done deal. Great system but all of that money comes right off of the top of the budget. At the last set of budget hearings, the Board refused money to Veterans affairs, Fire Department, Library, Sheriff and just about every other department in County Government. When you look at the Special District losses and what was deigned you will see that every request that was benighted could have been granted if it were not for the special districts' drain on the budget.

This is not fair to those of us that are not in a special district because we do our own work and pay our own bills and then are asked to subsidize the County operated districts.

It is not fair to those that are in privately managed private districts (there are many in the county) because they pay all the costs of operating their district and then are asked to subsidize the County operated districts.

Just to drive the point home, it is not only unfair, county council and the Board agrees that it is illegal.

This year something prompted the county to take action. At the budget hearing the board gave clear direction to RMA to begin hearings as soon as possible to raise rates enough to put the districts on sound financial footing.

The numbers that went out included not only a balanced budget, they included needed upgrades, future upgrade funds and an emergency contingency fund, all good ideas for operating a district. BUT when you are looking at operations that are 30 years old and falling apart, those repairs can be many times what residents have been paying. There was such an uproar that the Board gave the Resource management Agency (RMA) new marching orders: Don't fix it - just put a band aid on it; come up with a new set of numbers that will be enough to just keep them in the black.

That is why there are two or more sets of numbers floating around for each district.

Under Proposition 218, the residents can protest the increase. If 51 percent say "No rate increase," it can't happen. At this week's hearings some districts saw the logic in the numbers and accepted the rate increases. Others that had filed protest letters as soon as they saw the first numbers asked for time so they could withdraw their protest. This group fell into two categories: 1. Districts that were in a downhill slide (in the red eating up their reserve but not yet being subsidized); OR 2. Districts that were bankrupt and general fund money was being use to pay their bills.

In the first case the Board had the option of giving them some time to with-

Please see **DOG** on P. 6

Letters

Dear Editor:

Recently a story was published about the rash of home invasion robberies in the Bonnadelle Ranchos. One of the alledged thieves was apprehended by a victim and his neighbors. This alledged thief has since been released to custody of family in the vicinity of Ave 16 1/2 and 37 with a tracking device. The family he formerly lived with relocated to the Monreal and 17 area. All residents need to be on the look out for each other. These thieves wear dark clothing and often hit the same house more than once. A dark colored El Camino was spotted at one of the break-in sites by neighbors. At least some of [the theives] are minors and very aware of legal limits they face.

In the last home invasion a large knife was allegedly involved and firearms were reported stolen. Stay alert and contact authorities with ANY suspicious activities.

Wayne Hart
Madera Ranchos

Dear Editor:

We live at the corner of Berkshire and Trieste, where there is a 4-way stop. In the last year or so we've noticed a disturbing trend. Many people seem to have decided that stopping at this relatively busy residential intersection is optional.

I'm not the perfect driver, and like all of us I make occasional mistakes. And we've all been guilty of mak-

ing "California stops". But this is not a matter of making an error or an incomplete stop—this is blatant, arrogant disregard for other people's safety. Many of these people aren't even tapping the brakes nor slowing down—they're just sailing through the intersection at a high rate of speed as if the signs weren't there. And this happens daily, in all directions. We see it all the time.

When we first moved here 20 years ago this wasn't even a 4-way stop. The other two signs were installed due to the safety concerns of local residents. Now, years later, I have no idea what makes some people think there should be no signs at all. Children of all ages regularly walk or bike on these streets, and many of us have pets (not to mention a family of cottontails who roam the neighborhood). Someone is going to get seriously injured or killed here—it's just a matter of time. We're waiting for the day two people decide to blow this intersection at

the same time, and the results won't be pretty.

The real corker for me was watching a couple of idiots in a grayish colored mini-truck who blew through the intersection on Berkshire heading east, at what had to be at least 50 mph. Not only did they not stop, they were flooring it all the way through. Bad enough at any time—but this was Halloween night just before dusk! Fortunately the first major wave of trick-or-treaters had not yet arrived. How incredibly, unbelievably stupid do you have to be to do that? Are driver's licenses now found in boxes of Cracker Jacks?

Enough of this idiocy is enough. You fools know who you are. Find a brain and get a clue, before someone dies here. Those signs are there for a reason.

Rick Hodgson
Madera Ranchos

DOG cont. from P. 5

draw their protest. In the second, the Board is up against the wall. If they vote to continue even one more day they are voting to illegally misappropriate general fund monies. The board took the hard line. The district in question was dissolved.

I wish they wouldn't use that word!

Nothing is being dissolved other than the agreement that the county had to manage the district. What is really happening is that the county is saying, "If you will not pay us what it costs to operate your district we can not continue to manage your operation." At that point the residents get it all back and have the option to run it themselves or hire a private contractor to do it for them.

Please note what is happening will not get the districts out of crises; they are still falling apart and needing major repairs. All that is happening is that the "monkey" is being lifted off of the back of the general fund – or so I thought.

Now to steal a line from Paul Harvey: "And now, for the rest of the story."

This is the bad news part.

The Special Districts manager kept saying, "None of the Districts are currently paying the County cost allocation." Supervisor Wheeler kept telling the protesters that they were getting a good deal because there were costs that they were not paying. I wasn't sure what that was so I started digging into

County cost allocation is no "small change" issue, but in fact is many thousands of General Fund dollars not directly being paid to districts, but are still costs that the county would not have if they were not running special districts. It amounts to many thousands of dollars, possibly over \$100,000 each year. I don't see how this can be any more legal than the direct costs are. It is still using General Fund money to subsidize County operated Special Districts. If every county operated special district has a perfectly balanced budget complete with reserves and contingencies, they are still not paying this money.

A question to County Council: Is this a violation of Proposition 218 rules and therefore illegal as well?

There are much bigger issues that have yet to be addressed. Sewer systems and water systems will fail in the case of many small districts where it will be impossible for the residents to shoulder the burden themselves. Some will be saved with grants, some with bonds and some by merging. So far the county has had a very nearsighted view of the problem. We as a society will not just stand back and watch a community in crises when their system fails. We will jump in and bail them out in the end. It has been my experience that it is a lot more expensive to fix a car after it runs off of a cliff than it would have been to just fix the brakes in the first place.

The Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce Annual Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony

Maywood Shopping Center Friday, November 30 • 6:30 p.m.

**Santa will make an appearance
at the ceremony!**

Cookies - Coffee - Hot Cider

**Pick a star for a Veteran
at Veteran's Hospital.***

**Photos with Santa
for a \$5 donation.**

**Christmas carols by Flipside Church
and area Girl Scouts.**

***Items needed for Veterans: Instant coffee, white hand towels, white socks, lap blankets, toothpaste, toothbrushes, L and XL t-shirts, new books.**



for more information, contact
the Golden Valley Chamber at **645-4001**

Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce
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goldenvalleychamber@theranchos.com

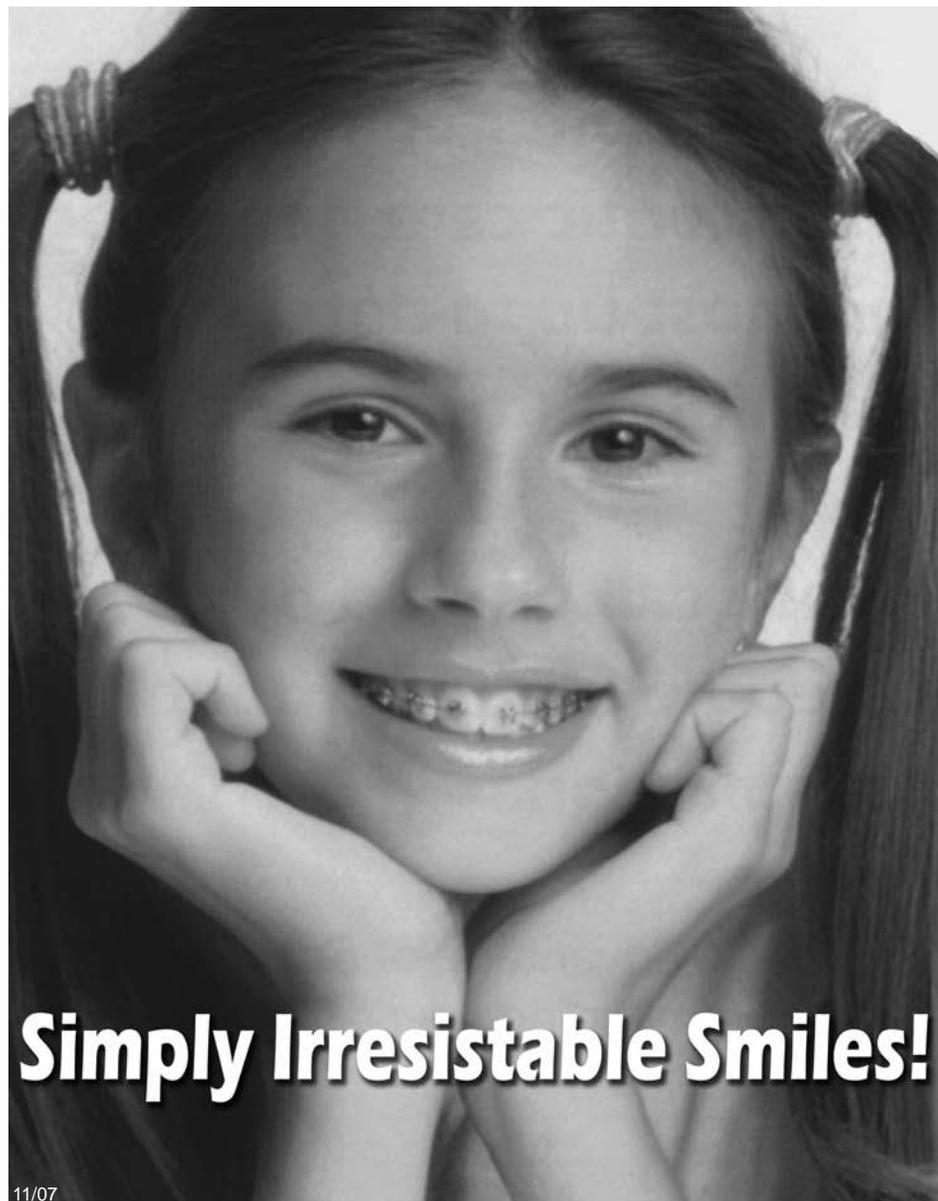
**SAY YOU SAW IT IN
THE RANCHOS INDEPENDENT**

Loss of Diane Felix Felt by Staff, Patrons at Madera Ranchos Library

By Ellen Mester

The Ranchos Library lost a valued employee and friend in a fatal collision on Avenue 12 on Nov. 3. Diane Felix began as a volunteer at the library and then became a staff member when a position opened. She was a wonderful addition to our staff and was well-liked by patrons. She was passionate about science fiction and enjoyed sharing recommendations about particular authors or series with patrons. Her enthusiasm for books and libraries was always evident, especially during our Summer Reading Program. She will be missed by all of us very much.

Every year The Friends of the Ranchos Library has an annual Christmas tree decorating party and all of the Ranchos community is invited. The children decorate the tree for the library and there are yummy treats for everyone. This year it will be on Dec. 6 at 7 p.m. at the Library. Please come and celebrate the Christmas season with us and become a Friend of the Library.



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As we move into the holiday season, think of the library as a great source for inexpensive gifts – books! We have books for children, teens and adults at very low prices in the Friends of the Library Book Sale Room here in the Ranchos Library. It is open to the public whenever the library is open. We also have videos and books on tape. All proceeds from the book sales go to the Friends of the Library who then purchase the new books on CD and DVD's for the library.

Also, if you'd like to make a year-end donation to a non-profit organization that supports the community in a variety of ways, think about donating to the New Library Committee. We need funds to organize and advertise fundraisers, print informational material and to seed a special account to purchase unique items for the library that will not be supplied by the county. All donations are tax-deductible.

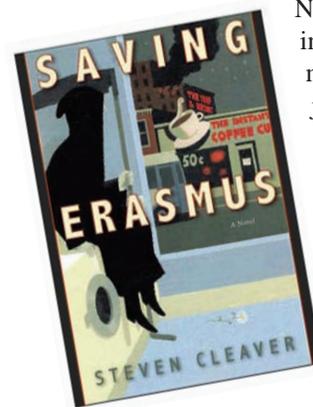
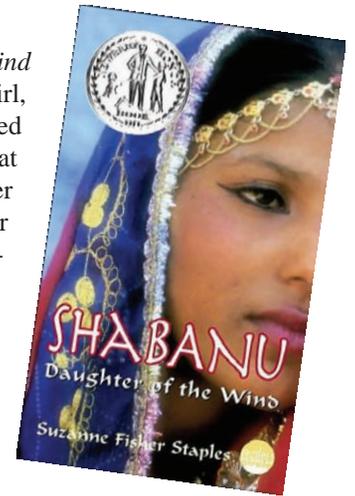
New Library Planning Committee Update

Elections of new officers have taken place as we move into our second year as the New Library Planning Committee (NLPC). We are in the process of determining the best way to fundraise and build up capital to help meet our goal. Looking at the new Mendota Library, which is a branch of the Fresno County Library, we can see that their funds came from several sources: the Library Bond Act of 2000, Measure B funds, the Fresno County Library District, the City of Mendota, the Friends of the Fresno County Library and a private family trust. It takes input from several sources to build a new library, so help us out and be a part of the NLPC. We need your input, your expertise, and your hard work.

Parents: Bring your small children to Monday Story Time at 11 a.m. with Mrs. Anderson. This is a wonderful free opportunity for little ones to learn about the library while enjoying a story read by a retired first grade teacher who has been our Story Time reader for over 15 years.

Book Recommendations

Young Adult Fiction: *Shabanu: Daughter of the Wind* by Suzanne Fisher Staples. As a young Pakistani girl, Shabanu is allowed certain freedom to wander unveiled and free as the wind. Her family raises fine camels that are prized throughout the country. With no sons, her father has taught her how to care for the camels in their harsh desert home, where water is scarce and sandstorms can kill even the toughest of desert people. Shabanu thrives in this environment until it is time for her older sister to marry and the family must travel to sell their most prized camels in order to purchase her sister's dowry. As they prepare for the wedding, tragedy strikes and a frightening turn of events changes everything. During all this Shabanu begins to blossom as a young woman and suddenly she can no longer walk around alone or care for the camels. She has drawn attention to herself and men will not tolerate her sassy, free ways – including her father. The strict rules for women in her culture seem harsh and impossible for a daughter of the wind. She plans her escape ... but where will she go?



Adult Fiction: *Saving Erasmus* by Steven Cleaver. Newly graduated Andrew Benoit is on his way to a new job in the town of Erasmus. He stops to buy mints and ends up meeting the Angel of Death, who happens to pop out of a jumbo washer at the local laundromat. Apparently God has given up on the town because they have lost faith, so he has turned it over to the Angel for total destruction. The Angel is giving Andrew the task of saving the town by being a modern-day Jonah. Andrew asks if this is because of his seminary training, but the Angel wryly answers that it is because he is the only one who showed up. The dry humor in this book is hysterical and Andrew's character

Please see **BOOKS** on P. 11



KIWANIS KORNER



Greetings Ranchos community, this is an update covering all the activities the Kiwanis Club of the Ranchos has been involved in over this past month.

The Firefighters Run, which is co-sponsored by the Kiwanis Club, was held at Liberty High School on Oct. 13 and was a huge success thanks to John Minney and Chuck Hoover. The run started at 6:30 am, with 70 participants competing in eight categories, ranging from kids to 70+. The Firefighters Run raised over \$3,500, which is used to acquire medical equipment for our local schools and volunteer firefighters. It is through this run that our local firefighters have been able to equip each neighborhood school site in GVUSD with a defibrillator.



The Pia family from the Madera Ranchos was selected as the Family of the Year over several other families nominated in our district. The award was presented by local club President Pam Glueck (center) and District Lt. Governor David Pinuelas (right).

Our Kiwanis Club also sponsored a table at the Valley Teen Ranch Fashion Show. This was a great event as all the proceeds helped with the building of their pool and other various projects at Valley Teen Ranch. We are proud to help sponsor this wonderful organization and all the great things that they do for kids.



Kiwanis made the most of Trunk or Treat at Ranchos Market on Halloween night, using the Cobb Ranch fire engine to distribute candy to trick or treaters. Here, members of the Ranchos Middle School Builders Club hand out goodies.

The club also sent a Kiwanis member and a Key Club member to the Fruits of Our Efforts, Breaking Barriers for Children Foundation Dinner; a Break the Barriers (BTB) event. The Barrier Breakers, formed in 1987, is the performing ensemble of students whose mission is to show inclusion at its best while celebrating all abilities and softening the hearts, opening eyes for awareness and generating hope for all people. BTB's mission is to "Break all barriers experienced by people with different abilities."

There are over 3,000 students who participate in any of the programs offered at their facility, including students from eight school districts. BTB is continually adapting classes to meet the increasing demand for this unique and one-of-a-kind program.

This was the first year that our Kiwanis Club participated in the annual Trunk or Treat, held at the Ranchos Market, where there were hundreds of little ghosts, ghouls, and goblins running around. This is such a wonderful event to allow children in our community a safe place to trick or treat. The Kiwanis had two vehicles decorated for the event: one was a restored fire truck from the Historic Cobb Ranch, complete with a fire dog by the name of Hunter, and the other was decorated in a pirate theme complete with a treasure chest, jewels and pirate skeletons fighting over the bounty. Our club was tied for second place for the best decorated vehicle. We thoroughly enjoyed greeting the ghosts, ghouls and goblins while handing out candy to them and giving out magnetic immunization cards to their parents.



Liberty High School Key Club members Kayla Hodges (left) and Griselda Ramirez were on hand to help hand out goodies to trick or treaters at Trunk or Treat on Halloween night.

The Kiwanis Club of the Ranchos is very proud to announce that the Pia family

Please see **KIWANIS** on P. 13

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The Olde Cowboy by Woody Laughnan

"It's hell to get old," said the elderly man sitting next to me in the doctor's waiting room. "I mean, a man still has everything but a lot if it doesn't work anymore."

He sure had that right. I'd rather break a dozen broncos before breakfast than go through my annual physical exam.

"Just hop up there and get comfy," the nurse instructed, pointing to the black plastic examining table so short my feet hung over and so narrow that one not dare lay on one's side as I once did and exposed my naked hind-end to the hallway. Two people recognized me without even seeing my face.

"I'd know that #@%-*#+@ anywhere," one of them said.

Anyhow, once I was settled on the table, the nurse said, "All right, now let's take off our clothes."

Whoop-ti-do! That made my blood pressure rise and everything that still could get up. But I was hesitant. I mean, let her take off her duds first.

"Sir," she admonished, "we have to take off our clothes before the doctor comes in,"

and handed me an abbreviated white gown with ties in the back.

"Sir," she repeated, "everything has to come off so let's start with our shirt."

There she went again: "Our shirt" when both of us knew very well she meant my shirt.

It wasn't until I started peeling off my clothes that I realized how cold an examining table can be, goose bumps popping up all over my body.

"Now remove our pants," she said.

"Are you absolutely sure all this is necessary?" I asked, considering making a dash for the door. "I mean we can postpone this if the doctor is busy. Actually I've been feeling real good lately."

"We can't waste the doctor's time. Our pants have to come off," she insisted, turning her back while I began the removing which was no small undertaking, trying to do the job with one hand while trying to cover my groin area with the other.

"Now our underwear," she said.

M'gawd! I was wearing the drawers that I never got the stains out of because of my inexperience as a bachelor and had not yet learned the fine points of laundering. As I let

Please see **COWBOY** on P. 11

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Business Profile

A Collector's Paradise at Game Room Boys

By Christi McKinney

Who do you want to be when you grow up? How about a Game Room Boy? Every boy from 7 to 70 just might want to be Rolling Hills resident John Robertson. Robertson is the proud owner of one of the most unique new shops in town called The Game Room Boys.

Robertson retired a few years back from AT&T as a Radio Microwave Technician and has lived in Madera for 10 years. Pinball machines have always been a hobby and he admits to having



John Robertson lines up a shot on one of his many arcade-style games at The Game Room Boys.

seven of them in one – of two – game rooms in his home. What Robertson has created is a virtual museum of 50's memorabilia and collectibles that started last May in the Maywood shopping center. Housed in 3,600 square feet, it's the largest collection of its kind North of Los Angeles.

The Game Room Boys was designed to be a complete source of game room accessories. They carry everything from pinball machines, video games, jukeboxes, neon clocks and beer signs to authentic, customized 50's diner sets. They have a wide assortment of collectibles including NASCAR, Betty Boop and Coca Cola, and they carry a variety of Tin Sign and car collectibles including: Rat Fink, Ruckas Rod and Kustom, GM Motors and Hot Rod Collectibles. Chances are if it's a collectible they will have it or know where to find it.

One of the centerpieces of the store is

a beautiful Wurlitzer Bubbler Jukebox, a replica of one from the 1940's. It sits in the corner glowing and bubbling beckoning you to play it. Some jukeboxes still play 45's others play CDs but this one can be even be connected to an IPOD (ok, if you don't know what a 45 is go ask your mom).

They have a huge collection of LED and Neon light pictures, several of which feature local landmarks like Tower Theater in Fresno or Merle's Diner in Visalia, and many feature James Dean and Marilyn Monroe.

Many of the juke boxes, pinball machines and video games can be rented for your 50's themed parties. They come preloaded with music from the 50's and 60's or Spanish tunes, or they can often preload music you provide.

The Game Room Boys offer service and repair as well as pick up and delivery. You'll often find Ed Gibson, the technician in their shop, with a vintage pin ball machine opened up. It's interesting to see what makes these old machines run.

You can visit their website at www.gameroomboys.com, call them at 645-4147 or just take a drive over to 37193 Avenue 12, right behind Cat's Diner. There you can spend some time walking down memory lane. Robertson's an encyclopedia of knowledge and he'd be happy to give you a tour. Who wouldn't be happy spending their days playing jukeboxes and pinball machines and calling it work! Where do I sign up?

Putting Heart into Work, Community

By Christi McKinney

Travis and Carla Hart, owners of Hart's Photography Gallery & Unique Gifts located at 37193 Avenue 12, Suite 3D, moved to the Madera Ranchos in 2002 with their 12-year-old son Andy to enjoy country living and to be closer to family. They both enjoyed photography as a hobby for over 20 years before starting their business last January and in less than a year their business has outgrown its original location and they have just moved to a larger space next door in the Maywood Center. They've recently upgraded equipment to create

posters and enlargements and do photo restorations and custom matting. Of course, some of the old equipment they kept includes a collection of antique cameras dating back to 1917.

The Harts specialize in portraits either in their studio or the location of your choice. They do many pet photos, parties, sports and action photos, and corporate events. Their website, www.hartsphotographs.com, allows proofs to be posted online so anyone can view them and place orders from anywhere they have internet

Please see **HEART** on P. 11

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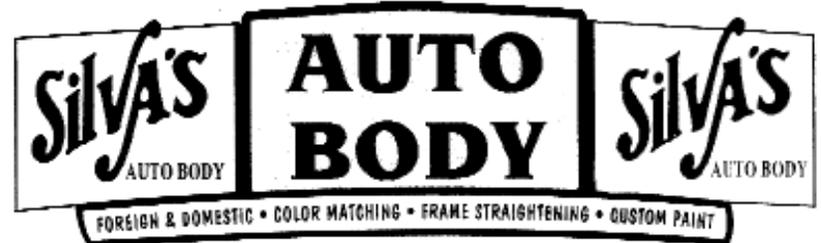
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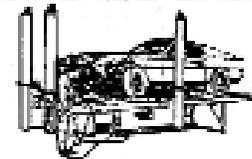


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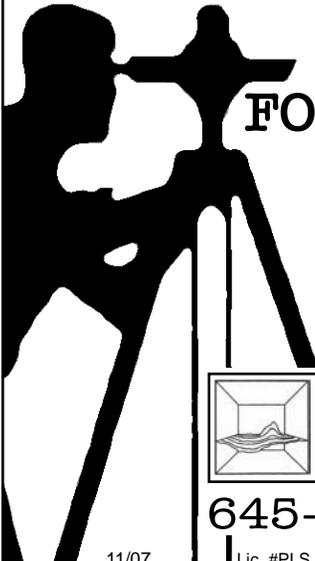


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HEART cont. from P. 10

access. You can also browse pictures from current events in the Madera Ranchos.

Their son, Andy, is the newest photo-bug in the family. "He has a real talent for photography," says mom Carla. "He does great work and sees things from a different perspective." Andy's also an aspiring actor who can currently be seen in a commercial for Cook's Hams on the Food Network.



Travis Hart takes aim on another perfect picture for Hart's Photography Gallery & Unique Gifts.

table books to custom tiles for your countertop. The list is only limited by your imagination. "We can literally put anything on any surface and everything is very reasonably priced," said Travis. "We went into business to give customers what they want and the service they deserve."

The Harts strongly believe in supporting their community and they've been sponsors for events like the YMCA Hall of Fame Dinner and the Veteran's Day Memorial

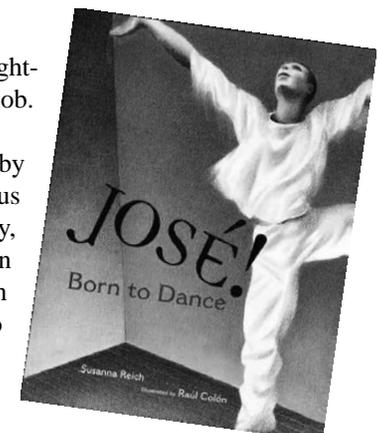
Unveiling in Dos Palos and the Valley Teen Ranch.

The Harts are now taking appointments for Christmas card and family portraits for beautiful Christmas gifts at 645-1918.

BOOKS cont. from P. 7

has the "everyman" charm to pull you into this thoughtful account of one man, one town and one heck of a job. Will Andrew be able to save the town in one week?

Juvenile Picture Book: *Jose: Born to Dance* by Susanna Reich. This is the story of world famous dancer Jose Limon. In a beautifully illustrated story, Jose begins as the oldest of eleven children born in 1908 in Culiacan, Mexico. His father was a musician and often took Jose to the theatre to see flamenco dancers, ballet dancers and other performers. When the Mexican revolution began, Jose's family fled to Nogales and eventually America. Jose was quick to learn English and graduated high school in Los Angeles. Finally, after years of factory work, Jose moved to New York to study dance. His talent was so great that he performed on Broadway. He taught at Juilliard and choreographed dances that are still performed to this day. His dance style is called the Limon dance technique and is used at schools and universities around the world. It's a wonderful bit of history, art and culture all rolled into a wonderful picture book.



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

COWBOY cont. from P. 9

them fall, I was never so embarrassed in my life, quickly reaching for the postage size wrap she handed me.

Presently the doctor breezed in and put a cold stethoscope to my chest and I all but jumped out of my skin. Then he hit me on the knees with a cold, chrome hammer and kept asking, "Does it hurt here? Does it hurt there?" while poking into some pretty sensitive areas before telling me to get on my hands and knees, raise my rear-end and rest the chin on the cold plastic.

Humiliating! Abashing! Shameful! Embarrassing! Dehumanizing!

I was all but terrified about what he

was going to do next. And then he did it: shoved a long, ice-cold metal tube with a headlight on it to light up a place where the sun never shines. "OK," he said after excruciating poking and then jerking out the tube, "that's it."

Unfortunately, the ordeal was not yet ended because I was in such a hurry to bolt the examining room I failed to put myself back in good order. This fact was called to my attention - as well as everyone else's in the waiting room - by a little boy tugging on his mother's skirt and blurting, "Mama, look at that old geezer. He's got his pants on inside out, is carrying his dirty underwear in a coat pocket and ain't even zipped up."

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Christmas is Coming to Senior Center

By Eleanore Burchell

Christmas is coming and so is our Christmas Boutique to be held at the Ranchos/Hills Senior Center at 37330 Berkshire Drive. We will have home made jellies, pickles, baked goods, candies, Christmas breads, tote bags, many Christmas decorative items and much, much more for you to see and enjoy. The opening day will be Friday, Nov. 23 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. then Saturday, Nov. 24 from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m., and on Saturdays Dec. 1, 8 and 15 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. We are very proud of our very first Christmas Boutique so please plan ahead and come in to see for yourself.

The monthly sale to be held on Saturday, Dec. 1 will only be the indoor sections, namely the bake sale, produce and Christmas boutique, from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. The Garden and Treasure House sections will be closed. At the time of this writing, the produce section had persimmons, pomegranates and lemons. Come in and check out what is there on Saturday, Dec. 1. There are a few cookbooks left and they are \$12 each. Christmas Boutique items are displayed on the shelves. Come in and see the necklaces, earrings, paintings, antiques, china items, etc.

We will have home made jellies, pickles, baked goods, candies, Christmas breads, tote bags, many Christmas decorative items and much, much more for you to see and enjoy ... come in and see the necklaces, earrings, paintings, antiques, china items, etc.

We don't want you to forget us during the week so remember the plant, produce and boutique sections are available Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., Tuesdays from 6 to 9 p.m. and Thursday evenings between 6 and 9 p.m.

If you are new to the area, lonely or just lost a spouse, we welcome you to come to see us. We are here for you. Many of our members have surely experienced your same situation.

THE UP SIDE

"The day you stop learning is the day you start to die so learn, learn!"

Our East Coast travelers have returned with many tales and photos of their fall colors trip. They visited New York, Boston, Quebec, Montreal, Toronto, Niagara Falls, Washington, D.C. and Pennsylvania. You need NOT be a Ranchos/Hills Senior member in order to travel with our group. Joann does our travel planning so if you are inter-

ested in joining us in future trips come in or call to talk with her. Our next plans are to take a January 2008 7-day Mexico trip. Again, you need NOT be a member to participate in our trips. For more information or if interested in other trips, call Joann at 645-4864.

A Panama Canal cruise is in the planning for April 14 - 28. A flight to Fort Lauderdale, Fla. will be made and then board the ship with stops in Jamaica and Cartagena, Columbia. Then it's off through the locks of the canal and exiting into the Pacific Ocean with dockings in Costa Rica, three in Mexico, namely Huatulco, Acapulco and Cabo San Lucas. The trip concludes in San Francisco where we will disembark. This is really a spectacular cruise. For more information call Joann at 645-4864 or come in for a flyer. Again, you need NOT be a member to participate in this cruise.

The October Birthday and Anniversary celebration luncheon was held on Saturday, Oct. 27. Twenty-two members attended. November's luncheon was held Saturday, Nov. 10 in Fresno at Acapulco. Approximately 30 attended for three birthday members and one anniversary couple. The celebra-

tion for December will be held Friday, Dec. 15 at the Pizza Factory, Avenue 12, Madera Ranchos at 5 p.m.

Remember BINGO Tuesday nights from 5:30 p.m. to 9 p.m.

If you need someone to laugh with, come join our Thursday evening potlucks with games played afterward. There is a lot of fun here. Remember laughter is good for your body and soul and being happy does not mean everything is perfect - it means you have decided to see beyond the imperfections!

More Facts and Fun

A nutritionally balanced lunch program Monday through Friday at 11:30 a.m. Suggested price for 60 years and older is \$1.75. Reservations are needed a day in advance so remember to call Joann at 645-4864. We have a growing exercise program being held on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 10:15 to 11:30 a.m. The partic-

Please see SENIORS on P. 22

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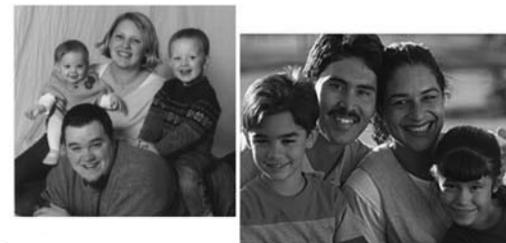
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ple of lay experience would be those persons in the agricultural, commercial, industrial, or recreational endeavors, which routinely require the assessment of water issues or interface with the water industry so as to provide basis of knowledge of water issues in California.

E. Members of the previous water boards, Water Advisory Committee and Water/Flood Control Conservation Advisory Board, were summarily dismissed.

F. The Grand Jury found that prior to their dismissal, members were not consulted for their assistance, input or expertise after many years of service.

G. The following grid demonstrates

the qualifications of each new MCWAC appointee as compared to the adopted criteria by the Board of Supervisors in Resolution 2007-193:

Appointee	Employment/ Education	Political Experience	Lay Experience
Appointee A	None	Yes	None
Appointee B	None	None	None
Appointee C	None	None	None
Appointee D	None	None	None

Additionally, Appointee A disclosed in his application for appointment that he has experience as a water broker, to wit, "In 1993, joined a team working to transfer water from Arizona to California. The water project was located in Cibola,

Arizona. The purpose of the transfer was to help stabilize agricultural water delivery and price to farmers in San Diego County and to secure drought year water for the greater San Diego area. This project is still under consideration, but water projects move at glacier speed."

Conclusions

The Grand Jury questions why the Board of Supervisors entitled the newly-formed group as a "Commission" rather than an advisory board; commissioners are empowered to make policy, while advisory boards are charged with making recommendations. As currently seated, the appointees consist of three real estate brokers and one dairyman. The Grand Jury concludes **these appointees, not fitting the standard created by Resolution 2007-193, were selected based on some other, questionable, criteria.** Allowing unqualified appointees to remain seated on this commission is a gross violation of the public trust by our county stewards.

Recommendations

1. Since the County has spent \$770,000 to obtain the Integrated Regional Water Management Plan, the Grand Jury recommends the Board of Supervisors move forward with the presentation of the IRWMP fact-based information to the citizens of Madera County according to the original plan: Circulate the draft report in November 2007, the final report in December 2007, and adopt the IRWMP plan in January 2008.

2. The Grand Jury recommends the appropriate district supervisor **immediately remove each unqualified appointee.**

3. The Grand Jury recommends the Board of Supervisors create a search com-

mittee to recruit qualified candidates in compliance with Resolution No. 2007-193 section entitled Qualifications for Appointment of Water Commissioner.

4. The Grand Jury recommends the Board of Supervisors welcome the participation of citizen action groups - stakeholders - in discussion of vital water management issues.

5. Finally, the Grand Jury recommends the Board of Supervisors acknowledge the many years of service of the volunteer members of the previous advisory committees, waters boards, and councils that have been abruptly dismissed.

The above report was delivered to the following persons and groups:

- Madera County Board of Supervisors
- Madera County Chief Administrative Officer
- County Counsel
- Madera County RMA, Engineering
- Madera Irrigation District
- Chowchilla Water District
- Madera County Flood Control
- Madera County Farm Bureau
- California State Attorney General
- California Department of Water Resources
- Coarsegold Resource Conservation District
- California Association of Resource Conservation Districts,
- Central Valley Regional Water Control Board
- Hillview Water Company
- Broadview Terrace Mutual Water Company
- Bass Lake Water Co
- Broadview Terrace Water Co.
- Madera Water District



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KIWANIS cont. from P. 8

was selected as the Family of the Year for our district. The Pia family was selected over several other families nominated from 22 other clubs in our district. The Lt. Governor for the district, David Pinuelas, came to our local club meeting and presented the family with their award. Later, the Pia family repeated the award ceremony at a Kiwanis Divisional Council Meeting. The Pia family is very deserving of this award, they are always there to lend a helping hand and strongly support our local community in various events. The Pia family was nominated by Kiwanis member Linda Bresee through the

Ranchos Kiwanis.

If you are interested in volunteering some time and giving back to your community, please feel free to contact any of our new officers for 2007-2008. They would be happy to answer your questions.

- President - Pam Glueck
- President Elect - Steven Monk
- Past President - Chris Parks
- Vice President - John Herrera
- Secretary - Sandy Monk
- Treasurer - Charisse Stindt
- Board Member - Ollie Ridge
- Board Member - Marie Cameron
- Board Member - Virginia Vick
- Board Member - Bruce Blair
- Board Member - John Glueck



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'Tis the Season to be **SAFE!**

By Dave Johnson

This month's column is dedicated to Diane Felix who left us Nov. 3, 2007. Diane was one of the very first supporters of Golden Valley Martial Arts when she enrolled her daughter Patty. Diane was not only concerned about keeping her daughter safe but was very involved in the community as a whole, assisting with many projects aimed at improving the lives of all of her fellow citizens. Being so accustomed to seeing her beautiful smile and experiencing her gentle spirit nearly every night Monday through Friday, it will be impossible to forget her. For those of you who would like to help, there has been an Educational Fund set up for Patty C/O Washington Mutual, 233 E. Yosemite Avenue, Madera, Ca. 93638 under Patricia Felix Acct#442-677870-4.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish all of you a safe and wonderful holiday season. Please put to use the many tips that you have learned in the past 18 months of reading this column to ensure the safety of yourself and your loved ones. Remember that during the holiday season a number of specific crimes actually increase. Be sure to keep gifts out of sight. Don't get so pre-occupied with the season that you forget about your basic defensive awareness skills: To be calmly and constantly aware of your surroundings (ALL of your surroundings) and mentally prepared to react appropriately to whatever, without feeling nervous, apprehensive, afraid or paranoid. In fact done correctly, you should feel very comfortable, confident and secure. This mental and physical sense will in turn be very evident to the criminal element. Keep a close eye on your children especially within the holiday crowds. If you haven't taught them basic self-defense skills yet, maybe I'll see you soon. Give your children the tools they need. Enroll them in Golden Valley Martial Arts for Christmas. Gift certificates are available!

Day-to-Day Safety

Recently much of my time has been spent conducting Personal Protection Courses throughout California. In doing so, I have noticed many topics that would apply to everyone, no matter their occupation. whether you're a real estate professional, a doctor, a teacher, or a full-time parent, there are many

things you can do day-to-day to increase your level of safety and decrease your chances of becoming a victim.

First, we must remember that Prevention and Preparedness should be our focus and Defensive Awareness should be our state of mind. Prevention comes from education, action and consistency. Preparedness reduces paranoia and increases self-confidence. Effective preparedness comes from realistic training.

So what simple things can we do to increase our level of safety on a day to day basis?

1. Try your best to plan out your day and then let someone you know and trust know about these plans.

2. Touch bases with this person throughout the day at specific agreed-to times. Keep in mind that unless you perform #2, #1 is useless.

3. Develop a "Code Word" or "Code Phrase" to use should you find yourself in a dangerous situation and able to make a phone call. By utilizing just these three steps you have created a sort of safety net should something go wrong. If your special someone is not contacted at the agreed-to time or if they are contacted with the code word or phrase, emergency actions and pre-planned responses can be implemented immediately.

Now let's talk about ways to avoid a bad situation all together.

1. Get out of the "Automatic Mode." It is easy for a majority of us to fall into this category. We get up at the same time, we do the same things and we drive the same route, etc.

2. Change it up. Remember that often criminals study their target very carefully and for some time. Take a different route, a different street, stop at a different coffee shop, etc. By changing your daily routine, you not only become unpredictable, you become a harder target and may even view the world in a different more refreshing and interesting way.

3. Look outside before you exit your house, auto or place of work.

4. Make sure your house, office and car doors are LOCKED.

5. Be sure you have a cell phone in hand before leaving to a different location and that it's fully charged and in proper working order.

Please see **SAFE** on P. 22

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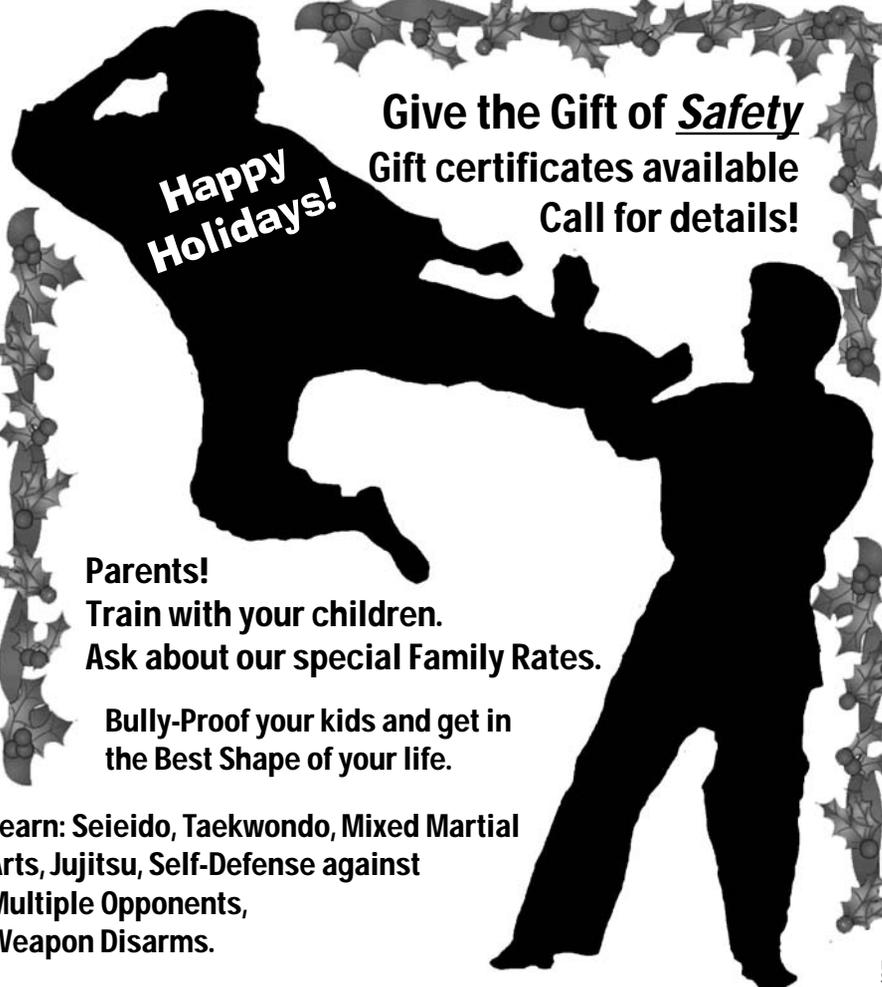


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Ranchos Student Invited to D.C. To Attend Exclusive Law Forum

This past month, Stephanie Doran, a junior at University High School at Fresno State, was among 350 students nationwide to attend a six day youth forum on Law in Washington D.C. Doran had been selected to represent University High School and the Central Valley. During the six-day program, she was introduced to challenging careers in the legal system. Doran visited the Supreme Court, toured prestigious law schools and visited the nation's top law firms. She also had the opportunity to meet the Supreme Court justices and question legal professionals. She and other students then got to utilize their new knowledge and present a mock trial of an actual Supreme Court Case.



Junior Stephanie Doran from the Madera Ranchos was one of only 350 students nationwide selected to attend an exclusive six-day youth law forum in Washington D.C.

Doran was chosen for nomination based on her academic record, extracurricular activities and community service. An Honor Roll student since kindergarten, Doran has shown determination in her efforts to further her academic excellence in every aspect of her life. Doran has participated in the California State Science Fair for two years, received the Principal's Medallion and the President's Award for Educational Excellence. An alumni of First Church

Christian Academy, Manchester GATE and Alta Sierra Intermediate, Doran concurrently attends classes at UHS, California State University Fresno, and State Center Community College District Madera Center. Doran has volunteered extensively in our community through her church, coaching her "Under 6" soccer team, Girl Scouts, toy drives and serving at area rescue missions. Doran is a member of the California Scholarship Federation, Travel Club, Interact and Yearbook Staff.

In her spare time she enjoys racing in the Hornet division at Madera Speedway and traveling. Last year she spent two weeks in Italy and in 2008 will travel with her high school to Great Britain and Ireland. Although she has not formally applied to colleges yet, she is interested in a career in corporate law. A lifetime resident of the Central Valley, Doran lives in the Madera Ranchos with her parents, Jeff and Debra Doran, and younger brother Matthew. Her grandparents, Ken and Cynthia Malding, have been residents of the Ranchos for 30 years.

Doran returned home from her trip on Sunday, Nov. 18.

Senior Citizens, Federal Government Assistance is Now Available

Senior citizens who are at least 62 years old and own a home, can now borrow against the equity in their home, utilizing the money for just about anything, without ever having to repay the debt. They can continue living in the home for the rest of their lives without the burden of making monthly payments.

This is now possible thanks to a Home Equity Conversion Mortgage created by the Federal Government's Department of Housing and Urban Development, also known as HUD.

This money can be used to:

1. Payoff an existing mortgage
2. Pay for medical expenses
3. Supplement income
4. Supplement savings
5. Make repairs to the home
6. Provide financial assistance to

family members

7. Establish a line of credit that can be used if needed in the future

8. Vacation and travel

There is never a risk of losing their home and they are free to sell or refinance the home, without penalty, at any time. All money received is tax free and has no effect on Social Security or retirement income.

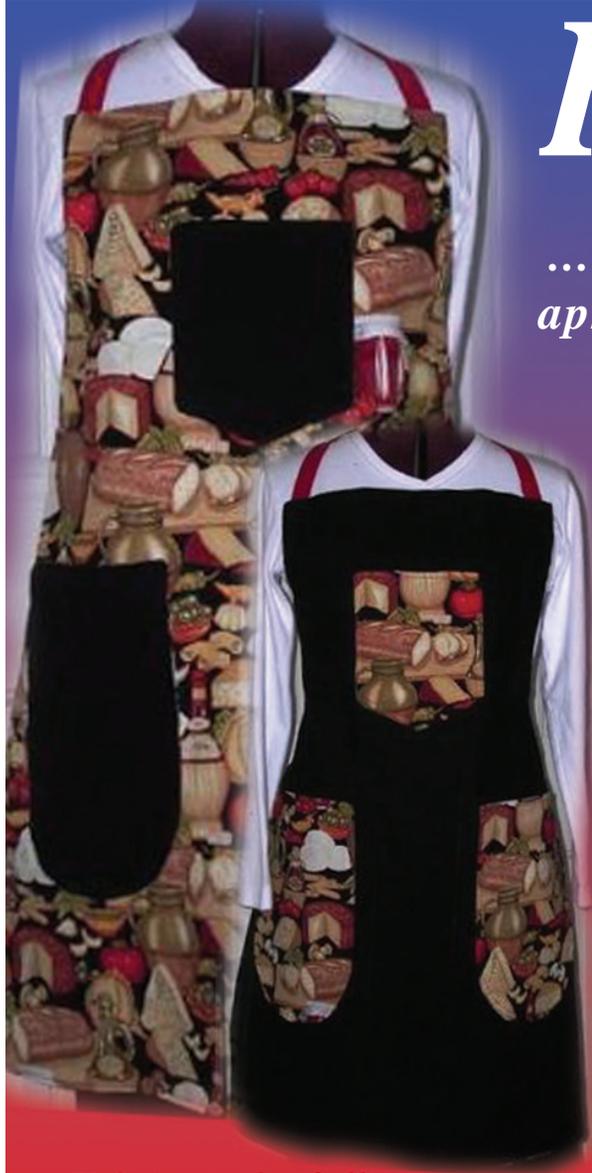
A free report reveals how seniors of Madera County can utilize this opportunity to ease financial burdens for themselves, or their loved ones courtesy of this United States Government insured assistance program.

For more information, call the Consumer Awareness hotline for a free recorded message, anytime 24 hours a day at 1-888-820-7076, ext. 56.

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ANSWERS

23				
9	÷	1	+	6
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X		X		X
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5	x			
X		X		X
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3	1	4	2	7	5	9	8	6
7	8	2	6	9	3	4	5	1
6	5	9	4	8	1	3	2	7

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on October 29, 2007

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Michelle Shannon and Nick Gates

and proud grandparents
Jack & Tina Shannon and Mindy Brandt & Rick Gates

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5:00 PM

Liberty High School Theater

Special Christmas Eve Service

Monday, December 24, 2007

4:00 PM and 6:00 PM

Liberty High School Theater

11/07



Golden Valley Unified School District Superintendent, Sarah Koligian.

By Sarah Koligian

As we are nearing the holiday season and all the excitement that goes along with it, this is a great time of the year to take stock and count all of our blessings. It is also a wonderful time of the year to see how each one of our schools is making "character count" within their community.

Character Counts! was adopted by Golden Valley Unified School District two years ago which included staff training before the program was fully implemented. Character Counts! is one of the most widely implemented approaches to character education in the country. It is based upon a

Character Counts! in GV Unified

framework encompassing six basic core values called the Six Pillars of Character: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship. Each of these character traits is associated with a color to help students remember the key points of each trait.

- "Trustworthiness" is associated with the color blue and the phrase "true blue" to remind students to be honest, reliable, and loyal.

- "Respect" is associated with the color yellow/gold to remind students to think of "The Golden Rule" of being considerate of others, be tolerant of differences, and to deal peacefully with disagreements.

- "Responsibility" is associated with the color green to remind students to be as solid and reliable as an oak tree as they persevere, use self-control and act accountably for their actions.

- "Fairness" is associated with the color orange and an actual orange that can be divided into equal sections which reminds students to share fairly with friends, play by the rules, take turns and be open-minded.

- "Caring" is associated with the color red and of a heart, which reminds students to be kind, compassionate, grateful and forgiving.

- "Citizenship" is associated with the color purple to think regally as in representing the state. Students are reminded to

cooperate, obey the laws and rules, get involved in community affairs and to respect authority.

Visible at All Schools

When you walk into each of our schools, it is very likely that you will see the six colorful pillars displayed in the front office, cafeteria, library and the classrooms. More importantly though is how each of our schools is implementing and living this program on a daily basis. At our elementary schools, Character Counts! has been embedded into their discipline programs and is giving staff many opportunities to "catch the children doing something good". Students are constantly exposed to the character traits of "respect", "responsibility" and "fairness" as they strive to be personally accountable for their daily behavior.

Sierra View Elementary School incorporates their Character Counts! program into their weekly Panther Express school newsletter by focusing on a specific character of the month. Deserving students are also selected as the "Panther of the Week" and "Panther of the Month" for showing good character in specific circumstances and are rewarded accordingly. The morning announcements include the character trait of the week and teachers utilize them as springboards for discussions and writing assign-

Please see **CHARACTER** on P. 21

Cross Country Takes Big Steps



Senior Captain Will Juhrend leads the Liberty High School Cross Country team.

By Tawny Walker

The Liberty Hawks Cross Country team has set forth their 2007 year with a new team and a new coach.

After Melissa Locke stepped down from the coaching position, Kevin Peterson was the first to step up and have the desire to take on the responsibility that would be set forth before him.

Please see **RUNNERS** on P. 21

"Donuts with Dad" is a Sweet, Sweet Time at Sierra View Elementary



Sierra View Elementary School hosted its annual Donuts with Dad event on October 19. More than 150 dads rolled into Sierra View and helped their kids devour 600 donuts donated by Vulcan Materials, fresh fruit donated by Art Fringer, and milk and juice Donated by the Ranchos Market. One student commented, "This is the best day of my life." It was great seeing all these dads out with their kids.



Vision Statement

Golden Valley Unified School District is committed to creating and maintaining an innovative learning community based in excellence.

RMS Carves Pumpkins for Locals



The Ranchos Middle School students have been active in the art classes. During the last two weeks of the month, students worked hard to create awesome carved pumpkins that were donated to many local businesses to thank the businesses for their support at Ranchos Middle School.

Ranchos Middle School wants the community to know that it LOVES its community! A special thanks to Mrs. Ketchum, the art teacher, Mr. Pinkard, principal, and Madera Produce for donating the pumpkins.

Webster Leadership Eats H₂O Melon



The first Webster Student Leadership event of the 2007-2008 school year was a Watermelon Eating Contest. Each class sent six participants to eat a slice of watermelon in a competition relay. Students were excited and cheering on their classes. Webster Student Leadership would like to thank all the parent involvement and help during our first event.

The focus this year of the Student Leadership Team is to encourage students to follow the Six Pillars of Character. Our motto is, "Compete with heart. Win with class. Lose with dignity."

County Awards GVUSD Employees

Madera County Office of Education held their First Annual Excellence in Education Awards Ceremony on Oct. 18, 2007. All Madera County districts were encouraged to submit three nominees in the categories of Classified, Certificated and Management Employees of the Year.

Golden Valley had two of the three winners for the entire county. The winner in the Classified category

was Cheri Adams, Sierra View secretary, and the winner in the Management category was Kristi Fisher, district psychologist. Additionally, Wendy Woods, Reading Lab teacher at Webster Elementary, also was a finalist for Teacher of the Year.

This is quite an honor for these employees and for our entire district. Congratulations to Cheri, Kristi and Wendy!

Valley Teen Ranch Visits CSUF Ag



On Friday, Oct. 26 Valley Teen ranch students, faculty and staff were invited to take a tour of the Agriculture Program at the California State University, Fresno.

The students arrived at Fresno State in the morning and were given a brief introduction on how to harvest apples, pears, pomegranates, pomelos and persimmons. After the brief introduction on how to harvest, the students were given free reign on harvesting whatever type of fruit they desired. The students mostly picked off of the apple trees, including different varieties of apples such as Golden Delicious and Fuji apples. They were then drawn to the other types of fruits that were available: pears, pomegranates, persimmons and pomelos.

After harvesting some fruit, the group reconvened and was given a lesson on how these fruits were cultivated. The manager of the ag department gave the students a guided tour through the orchards and talked to them about pollination and reproduction, crossing breeds genetically, the reproductive organs of the trees, grafting and how to tell the difference between the different fruit bearing trees. He then went on to talk about different career opportunities there were in the agricultural field.

It was a very educational field trip which gave the students a glimpse of what it takes to get involved in the agricultural field, and had some fun while they learned.

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Mission Statement

The mission of Golden Valley Unified School District is to provide our students the means to achieve to their highest potential within a caring, secure environment.



Golden Valley Special Olympians Compete in Bowling Tournament

Friday, Oct. 19, 2007 the Golden Valley Special Olympians team participated in the Madera County Special Olympics Bowling competition. We had athletes from Sierra View, Webster, Ranchos Middle School and Liberty High School in attendance. The athletes competed against students from throughout Madera County and received awards from Dr. Sally Frazier, Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA) director for Madera/Mariposa counties. Parents and friends filled the spectator's seats at Valley Bowl in Madera. The high score of the day was 118! There were strikes and spares all day and the athletes had a wonderful time.

Our next sport will be roller skating. We had our first practice on Friday which

included all of our special education teachers lacing up their skates and hitting the rink. We also had a great time skating with our Director of Special Education and this year's Administrator of the Year, Kristi Fisher. I am not sure who had more fun, the adults or the students.



Special Olympics had been a wonderful organization that has allowed our students to compete in various athletic events. It has taught them the value of teamwork and good sportsmanship.

Our students have overcome fears (swimming in the deep end), sharpened their skills (the 118 bowling score) and formed friendships while having a great time. If you ever have the opportunity to watch one of our events, I guarantee your cheeks will hurt from smiling!

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Snaps from Around Golden Valley



LHS Rallies are getting bigger and better thanks to increased participation from the classes, like the Juniors here.



LHS Freshmen constitute the only Division V freshman football team in the Valley and they've been playing strong teams.



At the conclusion of Sierra View's successful Jog-A-Thon, top fundraisers Travis Reinke and Courtney Osborn got to cover Principal Tefft with hot dog condiments.



LHS has an Outdoor Club that recently trekked up to Twin Lakes near Huntington Lake and spent the day climbing and hiking.



Ranchos Kiwanis sponsored Liberty Under the Stars and saw 13 acts perform with winners in four divisions.



Educational Options students enjoy some fun and games during Halloween festivities involving Independence and Lincoln schools.

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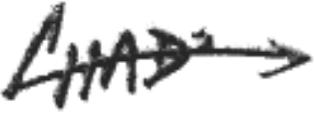
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 Tuesday 7 p.m. Life Connections Home Groups Thursday 7:30 p.m. Family Night
 RE-Generation Youth Group—Generation NeXt Children's Ministry
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CHARACTER cont. from P. 18

ments.

Webster Elementary School also celebrates the character of the month in a similar manner. One of their major community service activities that demonstrates the pillar of "citizenship" is the Red Bucket Food Drive that they are planning before the holidays. This is a time when the mighty Wolverines come together with donations of non-perishable food items that are assembled into gift packs by students, teachers and parents to give to those less fortunate in the community.

Ranchos Middle School students are also focusing on the pillar of "citizenship" and serving their community as the Mustang Student Body kicks off the canned food drive for the month of November. They will be collecting non-perishable foods in collection bins at the school to present to the Community Food Bank prior to Thanksgiving.

Liberty High School leadership students recently exhibited the pillar of "caring" as they received a "thumbs up" in the Fresno Bee for students reading to patients at Children's Hospital of Central California during Teen Read Week. They had the opportunity to pass out books and read to the children. They also had one bilingual student who was able to read to the Spanish speaking children. The students were recently featured on Channel 30

and Channel 47.

Liberty students are also participating in the upcoming Food Drive which is a competition between 4th period classes and also a competition between schools in their league. The winning school will display the winning plaque until next year's competition. The food will be donated to the Madera Community Food Bank.

The LHS Hawks athletic programs also incorporate another strand of Character Counts! titled "Pursuing Victory with Honor". Student athletes are expected to uphold and emulate the rules of good sportsmanship on and off the field.

Educational Option students participate in an annual giving event to show their compassion and exhibit the pillar of "caring" by wrapping gifts and personally delivering them to the patients at Children's Hospital before the winter holidays. Students learn that there is much to gain by giving and spending time with these children.

These are just a few examples of how Golden Valley students are demonstrating how "character counts" in each of our schools through trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship. We are proud of the efforts of our students and staff and our hope as we approach the holidays and beyond, is that we continually strive to give back to our community, just as our students have demonstrated for us.

RUNNERS cont. from P. 18

Peterson's experience in cross country includes five years of running and participating in a runners' club. By being involved in these activities before hand, Peterson was able to take in what he learned back then and use it for future reference.

"It's amazing when kids pass the finish line," Peterson said. "The first thing they do is turn around and give each other high fives. They are wonderful kids."

This season, a full girls' team was added to the roster for the first time in Liberty's history. Not only does this reveal hope for the future teams of cross country, but it shows that in the years to come, the cross country team will not diminish, but rather flourish with new aspiring athletes.

In order to make a girls or boys team, the team must consist of five people. Seven people can run, but the top five scores will only be what will count to the team's total. Although the runners are running as a team, they are always running as individuals in hopes of receiving a medal when they pass the finish line.

Since 2005, the boys' team has not only grown in numbers, but has also

grown in rankings. The boy's cross country team is ranked eighth in the valley in Division V. "We are the best, most invisible team on this campus. No one hates anyone," said Senior Captain Will Juhrend.

Although this team may seem invisible, there have been runners on this cross country team that have raised the bar of expectations and have risen to the challenges set before them. "The freshmen are gradually understanding what it takes to be at the high school level and realizing that in a couple years, they are the anchor of our program," Peterson said. Freshmen Sean Beintker said, "Cross Country is fun and everyone is crazy (in a good way). I was a little intimidated on the first day, but now I feel like everyone else."

The boys recently won the league championship and are on their way to the Valley Championship. The girls had wonderful individual races and will continue on to Valley as well.

As the cross country team continues to strive to do better, Peterson said, "It shows a lot of self-determination from kids who want to stay and run. I hope in the years to come the numbers will continue to grow."

SAFE cont. from P. 14

6. Contact someone and update them on your plans before leaving to a different location.

7. Make sure your car and home alarm systems are in good working order.

8. Walk with confidence, look around and make eye contact.

9. Be prepared to defend yourself.

10. Enroll in a REALISTIC Self-Defense training program. HINT! HINT!

DON'T WAIT UNTIL SOMETHING HAPPENS! Remember, "The WORST time to start Self-Defense training is AFTER an attack." The only way to really know how you will react when faced with a violent encounter is to experience that encounter in a safe environment.

CONTACT ME. I would love to hear from you. E-mail me at info@masterjohnson.com. Your participation is vital and appreciated. Remember, since we are all in this together, let's make it a community project, have some fun and increase our level of safety.

PARENTAL GUIDANCE: Spend

some time with your children reviewing the following sites: www.amw.com/kids, tcs.cybertipline.com and www.missingkids.com/adCouncil.

SELF-DEFENSE TIPS: SEEK PROFESSIONAL INSTRUCTION. Protect your space. Always stand at a slanted angle with one foot back spaced at about shoulder width. Hands should be relaxed and held between waist and chest level. Don't wait to be hit in order to defend yourself. KNOW YOUR ENVIRONMENT. BE PREPARED TO ACT INSTANTLY.

Master Johnson is a world recognized security and self-defense expert specializing in executive protection, hand-to-hand, multiple opponents, and weapon disarms. He is listed in the "Who is Who" in Martial Arts and was named "Master Instructor of the Year" 1996 by the World Martial Arts Hall of Fame. He is the owner of Golden Valley Martial Arts, Tactical Training International, Dave Johnson Real Estate and operates the World's only online self-defense and Black Belt training course at www.masterjohnson.com. He can be contacted at 559-917-5262.

SENIORS cont. from P. 12

Participants are getting more than just exercise by attending. They have fun and share laughs. There is still room for you and you can attend all three days or just one or two of them. The Line Dancing class is also a great way to exercise. They meet on Fridays at 12:30 p.m. This combines fun and exercise. You do not need to be a member to attend these classes. We have a large group, but there is always room for one more - you! Fill your car with your friends or neighbors; they will enjoy finding new friends here, too.

Come in and check these classes out. Our watercolor classes held on Wednesdays from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. are open and free to the Ranchos community adults. No prior watercolor experience is needed. The instructor can be reached by calling 645-1137.

Up and Coming Events

November 23, Christmas Boutique, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

November 24, Christmas Boutique, 7 a.m. to 2 p.m.

December 1, 8 and 15, Christmas Boutique, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

December 1, Monthly Sale, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

December 15, Birthday and Anniversary celebration at the Pizza Factory,

5 p.m. Avenue 12, Madera Ranchos

Weekly Events

Monday through Friday Lunch Program, 11:30 a.m. (Reservations needed, call Joann at 645-4864)

Monday, Exercise Class, 10:15 to 11:30 a.m.

Tuesday, Pinochle, noon until?

Tuesday, BINGO, 5:30 to 9 p.m. (Hot dogs, hamburgers, desserts and more available)

Wednesday, Exercise Class, 10:15 to 11:30 a.m.

Wednesday, noon to 1 p.m. Card BINGO

Wednesday, 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. Watercolor Painting Class

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

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

Friday, 12:30 p.m. Line Dancing Class

Please feel free to come in and visit our Senior Center and get acquainted with our members. We welcome you to come and be one of us as our organization offers and promotes social, educational and civic activities in order to provide a better quality of life for all senior citizens. You have received an invitation. Hope to see you soon?



Madera Ranchos Assembly of God

NW Corner of RD 36 & AVE 13 1/2

Office 645-0716

Sunday

Kid's Church.....8:30 & 10:30 a.m.
Worship.....8:30, 10:30 a.m. & 6 p.m.
Adult Sunday School.....10:30 a.m.
Adrenaline Youth.....6 p.m.

Wednesday

7 - 8:30 p.m.
Worship Service
Royal Rangers (Boys 5-17)
Missionettes (Girls 5-17)
Rainbows (Boys & Girls 3-4)

11/07

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11/07

Radanovich Speaks on Passage of SJ River Settlement

Congressman George Radanovich (R-Mariposa) released the following statement Thursday, Nov. 15 after the House Committee on Natural Resources passed H.R. 4074, the San Joaquin River Restoration Settlement Act, a bill to resolve a lawsuit between the Friant Water Users Authority, the Natural Resource Defense Council and the U.S. Department of Interior.

"The reason I first became involved in the effort to settle this litigation was to provide certainty to the Friant farmers regarding their water needs. This is the goal that they have sought throughout 18 years of litigation and water supply uncertainty, and a goal that they continue to seek today. This was reiterated to me as recently as yesterday, when four farmers from the Valley traveled to Washington to confirm their unwavering support for the Settlement with me

because it is the only solution available that provides the desired certainty for the future.

"I am very pleased that the San Joaquin River Settlement passed today out of the Natural Resources Committee. Implementing the Settlement, so that the farmers will have certainty about their water supply in the future, is necessary because sticking your head in the sand and doing nothing throws this back into the hands of the Judge and is irresponsible. However, I am disappointed that the Settlement was passed being partially funded by an increase in oil and gas taxes. Despite a White House statement in favor of the Settlement portion, the tax increase added by the Democratic majority prevented the bill from receiving the bipartisan support it has consistently had through this process.

"Although the core of the bill passed out of Natural Resources today remains the same as the Settlement legislation [H.R. 24] I originally introduced, I do not support the tax increase that was included and agree with many of the concerns expressed by my Republican colleagues about this funding mechanism at today's mark up. Tax increases, particularly on domestic oil and gas production at a time when the price of oil is rising dramatically, are foolish and irresponsible, and I sincerely hope they are not included in the final version of this bill when it comes to the House floor.

"Water certainty is the ultimate goal for the Friant Water Users and the driving impetus behind my involvement with this Settlement. I will continue to work to achieve that certainty in a responsible manner."

Democrat Shame On Veteran's Day Radonovich Says

Prior to Veteran's Day, Congressman George Radanovich (R-Mariposa) spoke out on the refusal of Democrats in congress to pass a funding bill for Veteran's housing, health care and benefits before Veteran's Day. Radanovich said the efforts marked the tenth time Democrats have blocked the passage of a standalone veterans' appropriations bill.

"For reasons beyond my comprehension, the Democrat leadership of this Congress has repeatedly refused to pass a veterans' appropriation bill that will be signed into law," Radanovich said. "House Republicans have asked for its consideration 10 times and 10 times the Democrats said "No" to veterans. Instead, they have chosen to play politics with our nation's heroes, by bundling the veterans' funds with the Labor-HHS spending bill – a bill the president has promised to veto due to excessive spending."

Radanovich noted that this year's veterans' appropriation bill originally passed the House overwhelmingly by 409-2 and was a \$6 billion increase for the Veterans Department that the president had promised to sign into law. "Yet the Democrats have not even appointed conferees," he said.

Radanovich said that as Democrats returned to their districts to honor America's heroes on Veteran's Day, the Democrats were being truly disingenuous to our veterans every time they said, "Thank you for your service," while at the same time robbing them back in Washington DC.

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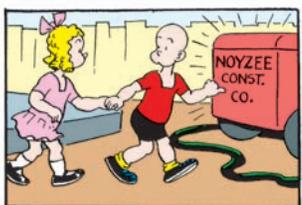
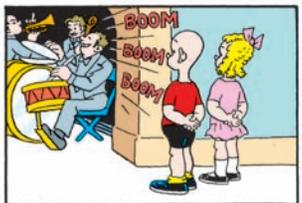
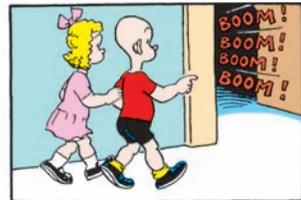
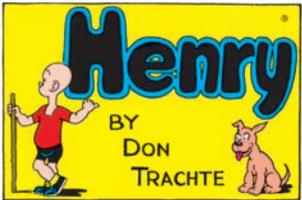
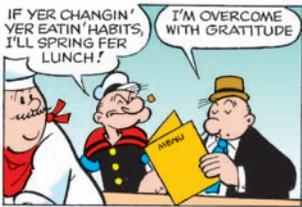
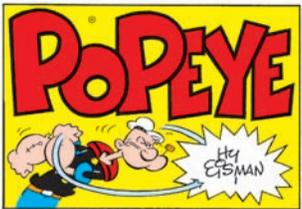
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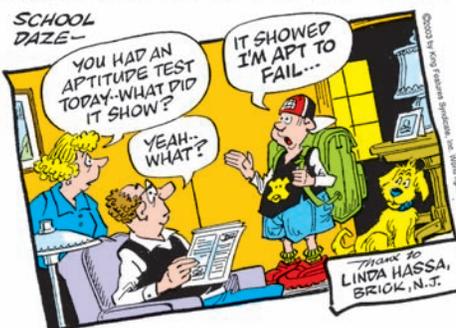
NEW STORE HOURS

11/07

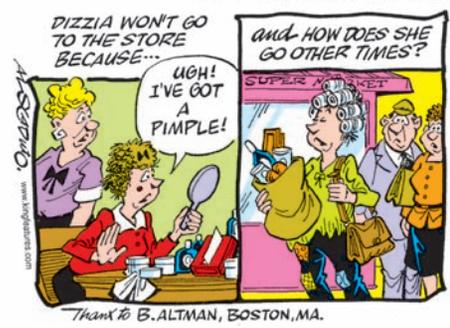
FUN PAGES



THEY'LL DO IT EVERY TIME



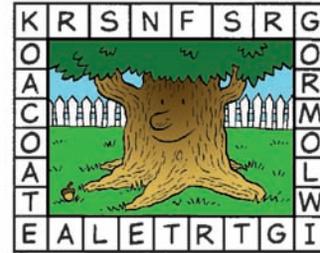
BY AL SCADUTO



J'EVER NOTICE?
MORE NOISE THAN
A BOILER FACTORY
GOING ON IN HER
ROOM--BUT WHATS
DAUGHTER TEENAS
PROBLEM? HEH-
HEH--GIVE A LOOK--



Thank to
WM.FRIETAG,
CINCINNATI,
OHIO

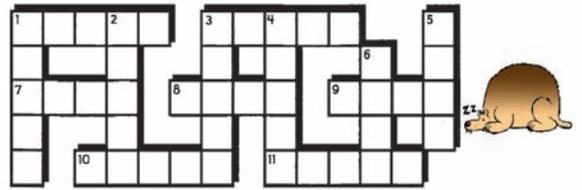


THIS PUZZLE WILL GROW ON YOU! Hidden in the above frame is a famous proverb. You can find it by reading every other letter as you go around it clockwise. The trick is finding the right first letter.

Answers: Starting with 'C' in the bottom row: 'Great Oaks from little acorns grow.'.



DON'T FALL ASLEEP SOLVING THIS ONE!



THE ONE IN A MILLION PROBLEM!

Professor Flunkem challenges you to create a mathematical expression that is equal to 1,000,000 using eight digits. However, the digits can only be 3's and 1's.

Answer: The Professor's answer is: $(333,333 \times 3) + 1 = 1,000,000$.

HERE'S AN EEEEEASY PUZZLE FOR YOU! Each of the five words needed to fill in our "word power grid" contain the same five letters. We give you one letter and plenty of hints below.

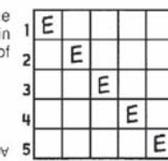
1. Famous western sheriffs.
2. Found in fruit trees.
3. An ancient weapon.
4. Reduces by cutting.
5. A bowling score.

Answers: 1. Carps 2. Pears 3. Spear 4. Paree 5. Spare



Below are words pertaining to winter, animals and hibernation that you will need to complete the puzzle grid above. Use the trial-and-error method. Try to finish before the first snow arrives!

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| 4-letter words: | 5-letter words: |
| DOZE | BEARS |
| NAPS | BEAST |
| SAFE | BIRDS |
| SNOW | BISON |
| WOLF | FROST |
| | RAWER |
| | RESTS |
| | SLEEP |



Wishing Well

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

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 ● INVERTEBRATES

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

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

- | | | | |
|-----------|---------|----------|----------|
| Annelids | Insects | Octopus | Squid |
| Butterfly | Leech | Oyster | Starfish |
| Clam | Lobster | Protozoa | Worm |
| Crab | Mussel | Scorpion | |

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TRIVIA TEST

By Fifi Rodriguez

1. SPACE EXPLORATION: In what year was the first component of Russia's Mir Space Station launched?
2. CARTOONS: Who created the fantasizing character of Walter Mitty?
3. GEOGRAPHY: What Central American country has no Caribbean coastline?
4. GAMES: How many players are on a volleyball team?
5. HISTORY: What was the name of the system of racial segregation used in South Africa in the second half of the 20th century?
6. LITERATURE: Who wrote the groundbreaking novel called "The Golden Notebook"?
7. ANCIENT WORLD: What field of study was Euclid known for?
8. MUSIC: What kind of instrument is a hurdy-gurdy?
9. FIRSTS: Who was the first woman to win the Medal of Honor for her medical work during the Civil War?
10. BOATS: What feature makes the catamaran different from other boats?

Answers

1. 1986
2. James Thurber
3. El Salvador
4. Six
5. Apartheid
6. Doris Lessing
7. Mathematics, specifically geometry
8. A hand-cranked string instrument
9. Dr. Mary Edwards Walker
10. Its twin hulls

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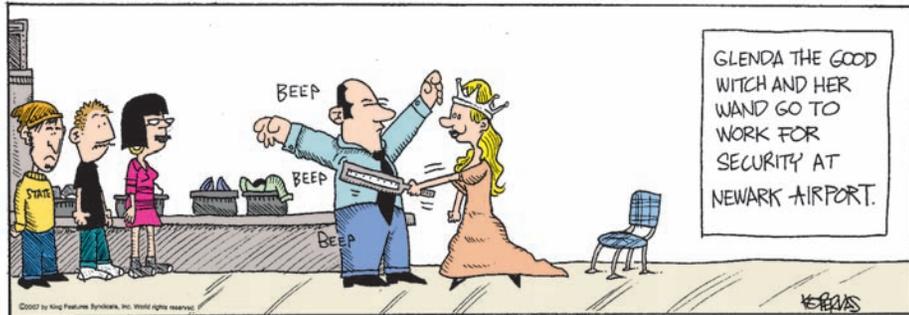
Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps



Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas



R.F.D.

by Mike Marland



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JERRY CRAFT



The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



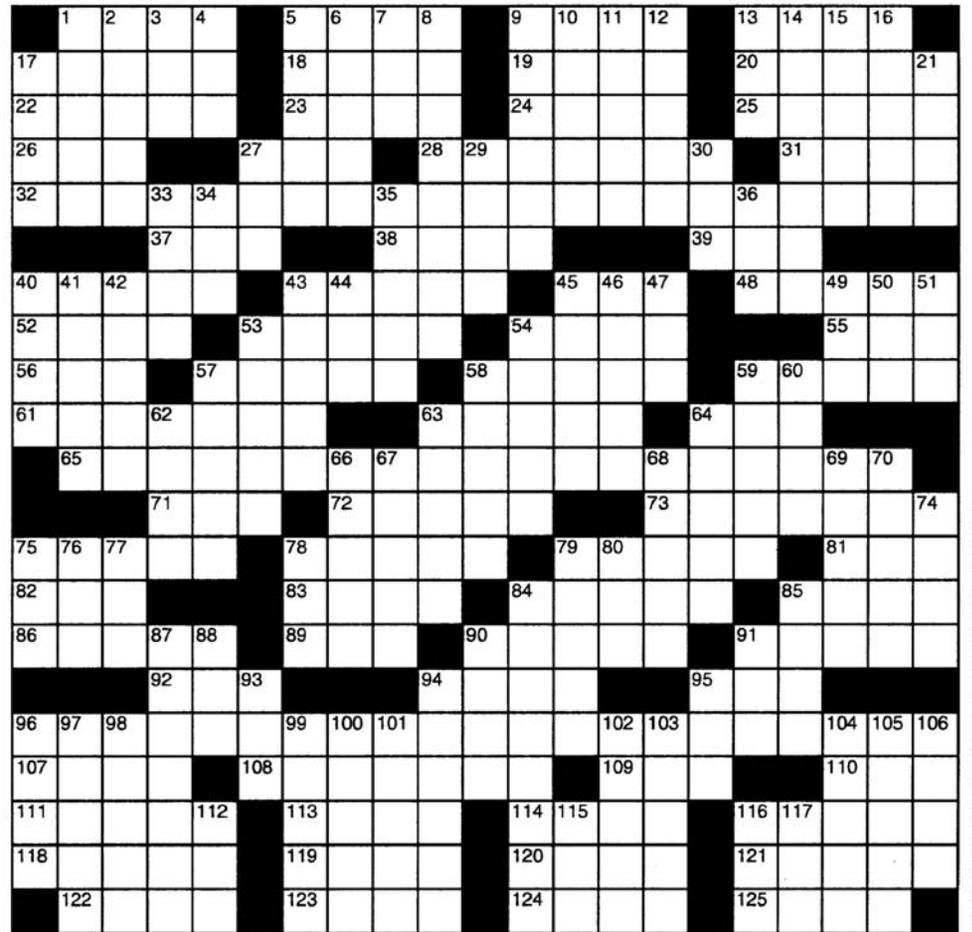
HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF



Differences: 1. Earring is different. 2. Doll's dish is missing. 3. Doll's shirt is stained. 4. Cabinet handles are added. 5. Mom's collar is different. 6. Girl's hair is different.

Super Crossword



- ACROSS**
- 1 Interrogate
 - 5 Took a dip
 - 9 Engineering course
 - 13 Theater collection
 - 17 Government group
 - 18 The Fates, e.g.
 - 19 Akbar's city
 - 20 Madonna role
 - 22 Moral man?
 - 23 Pianist
 - 24 Unwelcome visit?
 - 25 Plot
 - 26 Narcs' org.
 - 27 Roberts or Robertson
 - 28 Took in
 - 31 Dress size
 - 32 Start of a remark by Marguerite Whitely
 - 37 Malamute medic
 - 38 Eaves dropper?
 - 39 "— whiz!"
 - 40 Assumption
 - 43 "Tosca" tenor
 - 45 "Veronica's Closet" item
 - 48 Haggard
 - 52 Surrounded by
 - 53 Cook's cry
 - 54 Wilbur
 - 55 Curly poker?
 - 56 Crony
 - 57 Eisenhower, for one
 - 58 African capital
 - 59 Mansfield or Meadows
 - 61 Author France
 - 63 It comes from the heart
 - 64 Weep
 - 65 Middle of remark
 - 71 "Make — double!"
 - 72 Crack up
 - 73 "Evil Ways" group
 - 75 — salad
 - 78 Pennsylvania sect
 - 79 Rock's Tears for —
 - 81 Squash shot
 - 82 Garage supply
 - 83 — in (yield)
 - 84 Beetle Bailey's boss
 - 85 1,760 yards
 - 86 Put on hold
 - 89 Vane letters
 - 90 Composer Gabriel
 - 91 '78 Peace Nobel
 - 92 Actor Cariou
 - 94 Downs a donut
 - 95 Antlered animal
 - 96 End of remark
 - 107 Aphrodite's son
 - 108 Jeeves' master
 - 109 Say please too often?
 - 110 Buddy
 - 111 "The Full —" ('96 film)
 - 113 Guitar kin
 - 114 Author Dinesen
 - 116 "What — Bob?" ('91 film)
 - 118 Poet Sanchez
 - 119 Level
 - 120 Mall event
 - 121 Quiet partner?
 - 122 Singer Lonnie
 - 123 Start a crop
 - 124 Blabbed
 - 125 Conductor Jeffrey
 - 6 stuffing
 - 7 Ire
 - 8 Pitch in
 - 9 Kind of swallow
 - 10 Once more
 - 11 Treat alternative
 - 12 Hot spot?
 - 13 Mo
 - 14 First name in boxing
 - 15 Shinbone
 - 16 Berle sidekick
 - 17 Pinkett of "The Nutty Professor"
 - 21 Nautical adverb
 - 27 Favorite
 - 29 Kentucky neighbor
 - 30 Westminster winner
 - 33 Roman poet
 - 34 Aerialist's fallback
 - 35 Senator Hatch
 - 36 Spear-headed
 - 40 Mama's boy?
 - 41 Muscat native
 - 42 Marner or Lapham
 - 43 Diverse
 - 44 Khan opener?
 - 45 Actress Ekland
 - 46 Broadcast in July
 - 47 Bustle
 - 49 One of the Marches
 - 50 Finished first
 - 51 Born
 - 53 Perry's secretary
 - 54 Swamp
 - 57 Reggae's — and the Maytals
 - 58 Cold sound
 - 59 Pop Art pioneer
 - 60 Blind as —
 - 62 Relief initials?
 - 63 Tickle
 - 64 Gawk
 - 66 Violinist Mischa
 - 67 Inexperienced
 - 68 Inedible fruit
 - 69 Sound
 - 70 "— Gay"
 - 74 Facilitate a felony
 - 75 Fare for a fry
 - 76 Hurry
 - 77 Sprite
 - 78 Mr. Lucky's card
 - 79 Gounod opera
 - 80 Drop a brick
 - 84 Juvenal or Swift
 - 85 Certain
 - 87 shark
 - 88 Stretch
 - 89 Gun the engine
 - 90 Mirror image?
 - 91 Crafty
 - 93 Contemporary
 - 94 Hold out
 - 95 Word with good or bad
 - 96 Clears one's throat
 - 97 Forster's "— With a View"
 - 98 Singer Summer
 - 99 Parts
 - 100 "— Got a Friend" ('71 hit)
 - 101 Cosmetician Lauder
 - 102 Everything considered
 - 103 Bare
 - 104 Kapitan's command
 - 105 Armistice
 - 106 Table d'—
 - 112 Flap one's gums
 - 115 — Tome
 - 116 Prone
 - 117 Arthur or Benaderet

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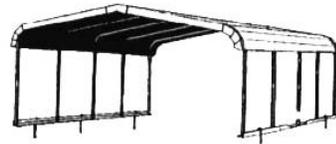
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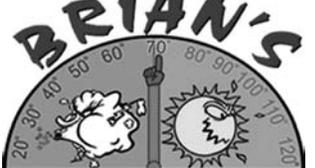
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ARIES (March 21 to April 19) Your work on a recent job assignment is impressive and is sure to be noticed. Meanwhile, expect to receive news about an upcoming holiday event you won't want to miss.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20) Saving the world one person at a time is what you were born to do. So accept it when people ask you for help, especially during the holiday season.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20) Now that you've resolved all doubts about an important decision, you can surprise a lot of people by defending your stand with your strong and well-reasoned arguments.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22) The holiday mood stirs your need to nurture everyone from the family cat to great-grandma. But don't overdo it, especially with teens, who like to feel grown up.

LEO (July 23 to August 22) Enjoy basking in the warm love of family and close friends. But don't fall into a prolonged catnap yet. There's still much to do before you can put up your paws and relax.

VIRGO (August 23 to September 22) Avoid pushing others to work as hard as you do on a common project. Instead, encourage them to do their best, and they might well reward you with a pleasant surprise.

LIBRA (September 23 to October 22) Like the sensible Libra you are, you no doubt started your holiday shopping already. But be careful to keep within your budget. Shop around for the best buys.

SCORPIO (October 23 to November 21) Love and friendship remain strong in your aspect over the next several days. This is a good time to develop new relationships and strengthen old ones.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22 to December 21) A beloved family member has news that will brighten your holidays. Also expect to hear from friends who had long since moved out of your life.

CAPRICORN (December 22 to January 19) Family and friends are in for a surprise when you accept the need to make a change without being talked into it. (Bet it surprised you, too -- didn't it?)

AQUARIUS (January 20 to February 18) Restoring an old friendship might not be as easy as you hoped. You might want to explore the reasons for your former buddy's reluctance to cooperate.

PISCES (February 19 to March 20) Your party-going activities pick up as the holiday season takes off. Enjoy your plunge into the social swim as you make new friends and renew old friendships.

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**4 Bed
3 Ba.
\$459,000**

11953 Trieste

Beautiful, new 2,746 sq. ft. custom on 1/3 ac. Gourmet kitchen with butler's & walk-in pantry. High ceilings throughout home. Granite slab countertops. Custom cabinets & tile. Large master suite w/walk-in closet & master bath with Jacuzzi. Tankless hot water, alarm & sound system. Finished 3-car garage & fenced backyard w/RV parking.



**3 Bed
2 Ba.
\$419,000**

12786 Road 37

Lovely landscaped home w/pool and horse set-up on 2.5 acres. Upgraded tile counters and flooring throughout much of the house, energy efficient windows and new roof. Sparkling pool, large patio, lots of grassy area and privacy fencing. Horse set-up has round pen, tack shed, tie up, corral and pole barn. Convenient location near local schools.



**3 Bed
2 Ba.
\$340,000**

16253 La Canada

2.25 ac. zoned for horses. Covered front porch. Living room with vaulted ceiling, family room with pellet stove, French doors & eating area with bay window. Breakfast bar, indoor utility room and nice floor coverings throughout. Landscaping front & back. Located in Golden Valley School District.



**4 Bed
3 Ba.
\$349,000**

35340 Ave. 13 1/2

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REDUCED 3 BD/1BA @ 29462 AVE 13 1/2. Cute 3 bedroom 1 bath home on a quiet street. Lots of trees in front. \$224,000.

FAMILY-ORIENTED NEIGHBORHOOD - @ 5946 E. McKenzie, Fresno. 3BD/2BA in Clovis schools. Owners motivated - make offer. \$249,000.

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COMMERCIAL - 1+ ac. corner lot on Avenue 12. Owner/agent. \$500,000.

INDUSTRIAL - 15 ac. 3 houses, office complex. RD 25 near Ave. 12. \$150K/ac.

INDUSTRIAL - 5 ac. w/house "as is", RD 25 north of Ave. 12. \$600,000.

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For Sale - Hot Tub 2007. Never used, therapy seats, ozonator, loaded. Full warranty. Sacrifice \$2,475. Can deliver. Call 559-360-9047.

For Sale - Bedroom Set. Solid cherrywood. Sleigh bed, nightstand, TV armoire, chest. Thomasville quality. New in boxes! Cost \$8K sacrifice \$1,950. Call 559-230-0486.

For Sale - 1 Queen PILLOWTOP mattress/box, new in plastic. Cost \$600 sacrifice \$195. Call 559-277-2511.

For Sale - \$295 all new King PILLOW-TOP mattress/box. Never used w/warranty. Cost \$700 sacrifice \$295. Call 559-438-0248.

For Sale - Dining Room Set - Beautiful solid cherry double pedestal table w/2 leaves, 6 chairs, 4-door china cabinet w/touch lighting. Cost \$8,000 sacrifice \$1,950. Matching buffet \$450. Call 559-275-8813.

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by Linda Thistle

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

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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.

	+		x		30
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-			+		+
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23			13		21

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SAY YOU SAW IT IN
THE RANCHOS INDEPENDENT

In Memoriam

Anne Elizabeth Helms

November 4, 1953 – October 20, 2007



"Annie" passed on Saturday morning, October 20, 2007 after a long, hard-fought battle with cancer. Raised in Alliance, Ohio she graduated from Marlinton High School in 1971, and subsequently worked as an optical dispenser for Dr. Stein.

She moved to Fresno in 1979 and worked for C.W. Smith Optical, later to own and operate her own business, "Helms Optical" in Clovis. In 1985, she moved to Santa Cruz and worked with Fortier's Opticians. Returning to Fresno/Madera in 1999, she remarried her husband, Don, and their love affair flourished.

She joined Kaiser Permanente as manager of optical sales in 2000, a position she cherished. She will always be remembered for her infectious smile and her insistence that, "Life is too

short to squander on sorrow, fear or regret." Wherever she traveled, strangers became friends and frowns disappeared. She loved her dogs, the mountains, music and time spent with friends.

She is survived by her husband, Don, of the Madera Ranchos; her parents, Bud and Maxine Jones; and sister and brother-in-law Mary and Ron Walls (all of Ohio).

At her request, there will be no memorial. Please send any remembrances to the Humane Society. Thanks to her family and all her dear friends for their thoughts, prayers and support. And mostly, thank God for you, Annie – you made our lives so much brighter.

May you touch as many hearts in Heaven as you have here on Earth. Godspeed Annie!

In Memoriam

Diane Felix

June 28, 1963

November 3, 2007



Diane Felix passed away on Saturday, Nov. 3, 2007 at the age of 44. Diane was a native of Fresno, a resident of Modesto for 10 years and a resident of the Madera Ranchos for the past four years.

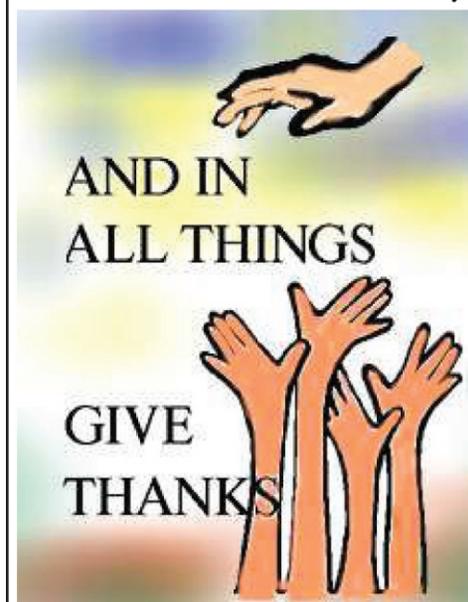
She attended Galen College and became a medical assistant. Most recently Diane was working as an assistant at the Madera Ranchos Library.

She is survived by her father Genaro Guerra of Madera, her mother Martina Pena of Fresno, her daughter Patricia Raquel Felix of Madera, her

siblings Margaret Guardado of Modesto, Genaro Guerra, Jr. of Concord, James Guerra of Santa Clara, Martin Guerra of Chicago, IL, Richard Guerra of Modesto, David Guerra of Los Banos, numerous nieces, nephews, grand nieces and grand nephews.

Her funeral service was held on Saturday, Nov. 10 at Jay Chapel in Madera.

Remembrances may be made to: The Patricia Felix Educational Fund, C/O Washington Mutual, 233 E. Yosemite Avenue, Madera, CA 93638. Acct #442-677870-4.

*"For all that you are thankful for...**...you're welcome" -God*

"Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever"

*-Psalms 106:1**Pastor David Swift*

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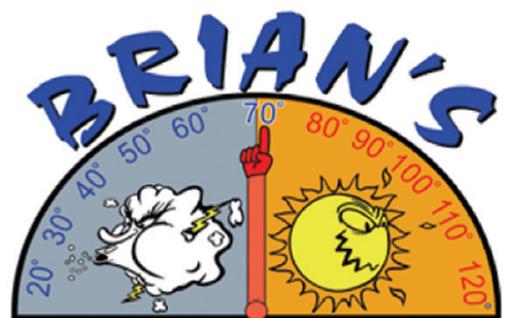
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