

The Ranchos Independent



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Free, Low-Flow Hardware for the Ranchos is Here



Madera County District 1 Supervisor Brett Frazier (right) is the latest Ranchos resident to receive free, low-flow shower heads and faucet aerators from SEMCU volunteer Verlin Dill, the result of a \$220,000 grant from the state of California championed by SEMCU.

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\$220,000 Grant from State Means Free, Low-Flow Hardware is Here

By Karen Petryna

The Southeast Madera County United (SEMCU) project for distribution of free low-flow shower heads and faucet aerators that was announced last October is now in full swing with about 10 percent of the hardware already distributed to residents and businesses in the 93636 zip code. Made available through the \$220,000 Water-Energy Grant Award managed by the California Department of Water Resources, the project goal is to replace about 75 percent of all the shower heads and faucet aerators of homes and businesses in the geographic area covered by the 93636 zip code.

Wide Distribution Area

There are approximately 4,200 addresses in the 93636 zip code area, almost exactly the area of SEMCU's focus, namely southeast Madera County. The non-profit organization, which has been in operation since 2010, has been developing the plan to distribute the low-flow hardware to at least 3,000 locations, or three quarters of its territory since early 2015. Now in full swing, the project has involved getting the word out through advertising and using direct mailers sent to all 4,200 addresses to detail exactly where and when the free, water-conserving shower heads and faucet aerators can be obtained.

All the low-flow hardware is manufactured by AM Conservation Group, a company which produces a wide variety of

conservation products. All of the AM Conservation Group items that are being distributed in the Ranchos are specially made to produce the same kind of pressure expected from the regular flow versions and they all have a 10-year warranty.

Several Locations and Times to Pick Up Hardware

Currently the free hardware is available at two locations on a regular basis: The Ranchos Chamber of Commerce and the Ranchos/Hills Senior Center. Located in the Maywood Shopping Center, the Ranchos Chamber of Commerce office, across from the Ranchos Library, is open every Monday through Wednesday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. — all during which time the hardware is available. Residents and business owners need only come in and pick up a requisition form from Virginia Vick and fill it out to specify the number of showers and faucets currently in use and then pick from among several choices to replace both with a low-flow variety. For those who can't make it to the Chamber on weekdays during the day, the hardware is also available every first Saturday of the month from 8 a.m. to noon at the Ranchos/Hills Senior Center Bake Sale. The Center is located at 37330 Berkshire behind the Maywood Shopping Center.

So far the Chamber has filled close to 200 orders, generally consisting of a couple shower heads, one or two kitchen or utility sink faucet aerators and three to six bathroom sink faucet aerators, which together

would retail for about \$75 to \$85. The biggest distribution so far was at the Senior Center Home & Garden Festival on April 2. Advertised in both the Ranchos Independent and with mailers sent out separately, the Festival was not only a big success in its own right, but SEMCU volunteers passed out about 125 orders that day that included free reusable bags and shower timers.

Upcoming Distribution Events

Two additional upcoming local events are expected to send the hardware order distribution total over the 500 mark: The Taste of the Ranchos event to be held at the Branch and Vine at 38802 Avenue 12 on Sunday, May 1 by the Ranchos Kiwanis, and the Flatlanders Day Parade and Crafts Fair to bene-

fit the Ranchos Chamber of Commerce and the Ranchos Library, on Saturday, May 14 from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Get Involved and Learn More

If you would like to learn more about what SEMCU is doing in the community, or get involved, please feel free to join your neighbors at the next SEMCU meeting held on the third Monday of every month at 6:30 p.m. at the Pizza Factory. You can also learn more about SEMCU by checking out their website, www.semcu.org, or on Facebook under "South East Madera County United." And, as always, reminders about SEMCU and other community meetings and events are sent out regularly to those who Like the Ranchos Independent on Facebook.

GVUSD to Participate in WeTip

Along with neighboring school districts, Golden Valley Unified School District has partnered with the WeTip School Safety program, which offers an anonymous hotline to students and their families. The hotline is a way for people to get involved in establishing a safer community.

Students are sometimes afraid to report crime information because they fear repercussions from the person on whom they are reporting. The hotline gives students and their families an opportunity to give the information without fear.

When an operator is called, a series

of questions, designed by law enforcement, are asked to obtain the maximum amount of information about the reported crime. The information is immediately conveyed to the appropriate police, fire and sheriff's agencies. Cash rewards of up to \$1,000 are given upon verified reports from law enforcement that WeTip information was received prior to arrest and that the information was helpful in the arrest and conviction.

No one will ask your name, you will remain anonymous and you can call 800-78-CRIME 24 hours a day.

MD-10a Gets New Well for FREE and Valley Teen Ranch can Relax

By Karen Petryna

At 6 p.m. on March 30, approximately 45 Ranchos residents from Maintenance District 10a (MD-10a) met at the Ranchos Middle School cafeteria with representatives from the State and the County to get an update on the potential project to consolidate the water systems of Valley Teen Ranch (VTR) and MD-10a. It was the second such meeting in four months and it was well worth the wait. The bottom line: The project has been green-lighted by the County, it will have full funding from the State and there will be no increase in maintenance fees for ratepayers of MD-10a.

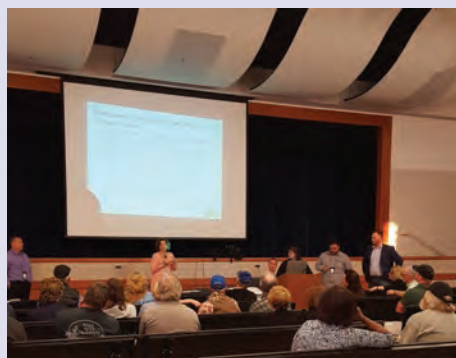
Valley Teen Ranch

Located at Road 35 just south of Avenue 11, VTR, a residential treatment center for male juvenile offenders, is the furthest facility that has ever been considered for consolidation with MD-10a, yet the project will greatly benefit both entities. For VTR, which has been using bottled water for

drinking ever since arsenic contamination was detected in its well, it will not only mean a new, reliable source of potable water, but it will put the organization out of the public water supply business with all its associated regulations and complications. For MD-10a, it will mean a brand new well to add to the current system at no cost for either installation or maintenance, a fortunate result of recognizing the need to install the well closer to the MD-10a system because it is 19 feet higher than VTR's location.

When the then \$2.9 million project was originally conceived and applied for

by Provost & Prichard Consulting Group several years ago, the plan was to install the new 800 gallon per minute supply well



The auditorium at the Ranchos Middle School was again the site of a public discussion on MD-10a, this time to find out the state was providing another well to the system at no cost.

on VTR property, if for no other reason than to avoid the kind of trouble and expense that was involved in picking the last MD-10a well site on Dublin Road. But, after the application was made, it sat for several years in the State's "in basket" while bureaucrats there went through a lengthy reorganization process. Last

year, with new funding available, the Water Board came to Madera County and asked the County to reapply on behalf of VTR, using VTR's classification of a "dis-

advantaged system" in order to procure full funding from the State.

Meanwhile, the original plan revealed that the VTR property is significantly lower in surface elevation than MD-10a territory, a condition that would require water to not only pump out of the ground but also have about 90 percent of it pumped uphill to MD-10a.

With or Without Us

As Ranchos residents learned at the last consolidation meeting in December, 2015, VTR was going to get a new well with or without consolidation with MD-10a, the only question was one of cost. And at that meeting, several residents expressed concern that a Proposition 218 vote, a law passed in 1996 that allows communities to vote on tax increases, would not pass to allow the County to raise rates. But, the rate study the County conducted in the intervening months revealed that operation and maintenance

Please see **FREE WELL** on P. 18

Threat of Home Loss at Upcoming County Tax Auction is Latest Scam

By Randy Bailey

The latest scam to hit Madera County residents involves calling property owners to scare them into thinking their property is going to be sold by the County in an upcoming tax auction and then trying to get "tax default" payments from the land owners to keep from losing their homes.

Tracy Kennedy, Madera County Treas-

urer-Tax Collector, is getting the word out that individuals are contacting Madera County property owners, claiming their property is scheduled to be sold at a tax auction on May 14. These individuals are not affiliated with nor authorized by Madera County to contact property owners. Kennedy says that if you are contacted by one of these individuals do not provide them with any personal information or make any payments

for alleged unpaid taxes. She recommends that you immediately contact the Madera County Sheriff's office at 559-675-7770.

The Madera County Tax Collector will be having a Tax Defaulted Land Sale online beginning on May 14 that will continue through May 17, however Kennedy says that the County has not yet advertised or determined the final number of parcels that will be offered for sale. Once the parcel list is fi-

nalized, the interested parties may access the following website: www.maderacounty.com/treasurer and select "Online Tax Sale" on the menu to see if their parcel was included.

Kennedy says if you are concerned that your property is included in the upcoming tax sale, please call the Madera County Treasurer-Tax Collector's office at 559-675-7713.

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Letters

Dear Editor:

(RE: March 2016 Generation Why "Free" column)

There is no free lunch!

Just to throw some numbers out: Bernie Sanders says he wants to tax the rich at 90 percent (Hillary is wanting to raise taxes for her own set of freebies as well). This, when a person's income reaches a certain threshold – let's say \$10 billion. So John Doe worked very hard and earned \$10 billion one year and his tax would be 90 percent of that or \$9 billion (he can live on a billion dollars, right?) What are the chances after that hit he would ever do that again? With the way Bernie wants to be able to give away all of these services and college for free, he will need a large tax revenue to support it and will have to keep lowering the income threshold each year to collect what he needs to make the strokes for all of those freebies. As that threshold gets down to around the \$100,000 level, John Doe, Jr. – who now works at his job with a \$100,000 yearly salary that he obtained thanks to his free college education – would net \$10,000 per year. So, his free education cost him not a one-time expense of \$90,000, but \$90,000 for the rest of his working career!

All of those freebies are going to have to be paid by some means and guess what? You're it! And remember, all of those free college, healthcare, clothing, phones, everything are not a one-time occurrence. In fact, the demand for those freebies will go up as the revenues for them dry up. Pretty soon everyone is working just to pay for those that aren't and receiving their gub'ment handout. People with those fancy degrees won't enjoy the income that their local trash man earns.

Classic Socialism! There is no free lunch.

Greg Gustafson
Rolling Hills

Dear Editor:

Residents and property owners of Madera Ranchos, I would like to take this opportunity to commend our Supervisor of District One, Brett Frazier, for convening the second of two meetings that had mailed out notices to the rate payers of the Madera Ranchos Special District water system, known as MD-10a, for a public meeting regarding the inclusion of the Valley Teen Ranch water system into our MD-10a. If you own property within the boundaries of Avenue 13 to the north, Kensington to the south, Road 36 to the west and Road 38 to the east, and you turn your sink faucet on or flush your toilet and you do not have your own well on your own property, you most probably are a rate payer of MD-10a.

Mr. Frazier and the staff of Madera County, along with two California State representatives of the water board – along with others – have put forth a proposal for a California State grant to drill and equip a new 800 gallon per minute (gpm) well within the boundaries of MD-10a. MD-10a will provide, from that increase in water supply, approximately 80 gpm to Valley Teen Ranch. This additional well will mean five functioning wells for MD-10a. MD-10a has never had this supply of water, which means that the entire area of Madera Ranchos has the potential to be in better condition than it has ever been. At this time, there are four functioning wells supplying water to MD-10a, including New Fender. Mr. Frazier has made a direct effort to include the rate payers of MD-10a in this process and has done it to correct the history of this community being told what has happened to our money or management of that money after the fact. Of the almost 1,000 invitations to MD-10a rate payers that are sent out for our involvement and participation, perhaps 70 people show up. I believe that Brett Frazier has spent this last year working to improve the conditions of our community. This last meeting had positive advancement with all interested parties. There was an adjustment that actually financially benefited the rate payers in this instance at this time for this project. There are many projects that need to be planned for. I consider Mr. Frazier to be trustworthy and living up to his commitment to serve this community and the entire District One that he represents. The immediate issues, and the next 10 to 20 years of infrastructure necessary for this community, need to be a concern and effort put forth by the property owners of this community. One Supervisor cannot correct or address all of the issues existing in District One without the input and support of the individual communities that we live in.

Mr. Frazier announced that he intends to have a town hall meeting in the Ranchos for the MD-10a rate payers and community at large to announce his continuing efforts to involve this community in what he and the other four Supervisors vote on as our County Supervisors; in this case the Board of Directors of MD-10a spending the \$600,000 per year that is collected from the almost 1,000 rate payers of MD-10a.

Lack of participation has led to a dysfunctioning community water system in MD-10a, in my humble opinion. Rate payers do not participate in processes that impact their ability to have water in their homes. Madera County employees for the most part do not live here, do not contribute to the money that is spent and consider us as a source of rev-

Please see **LETTERS** on P. 11

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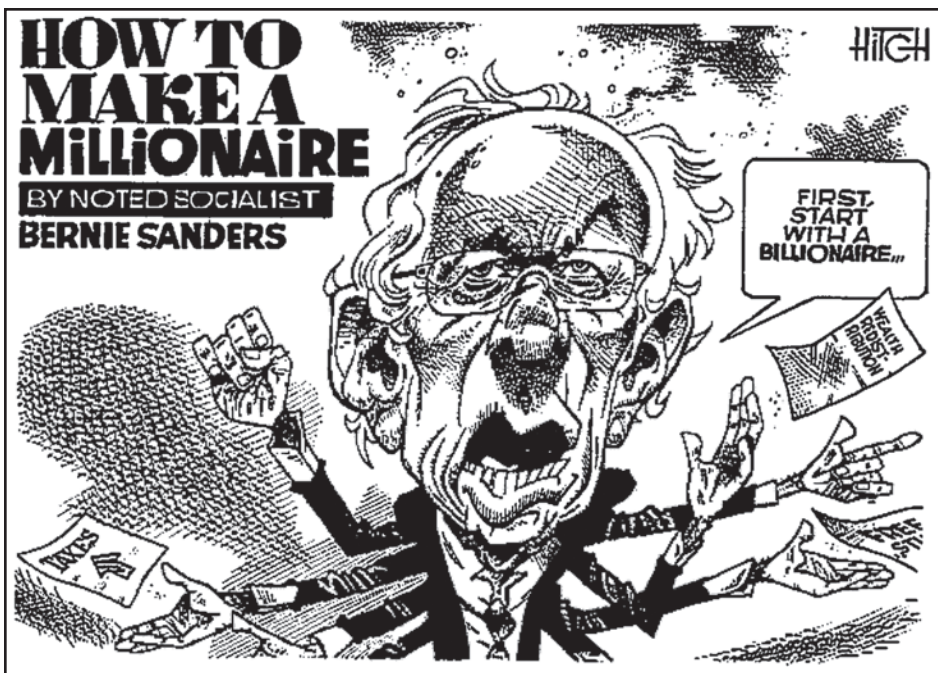
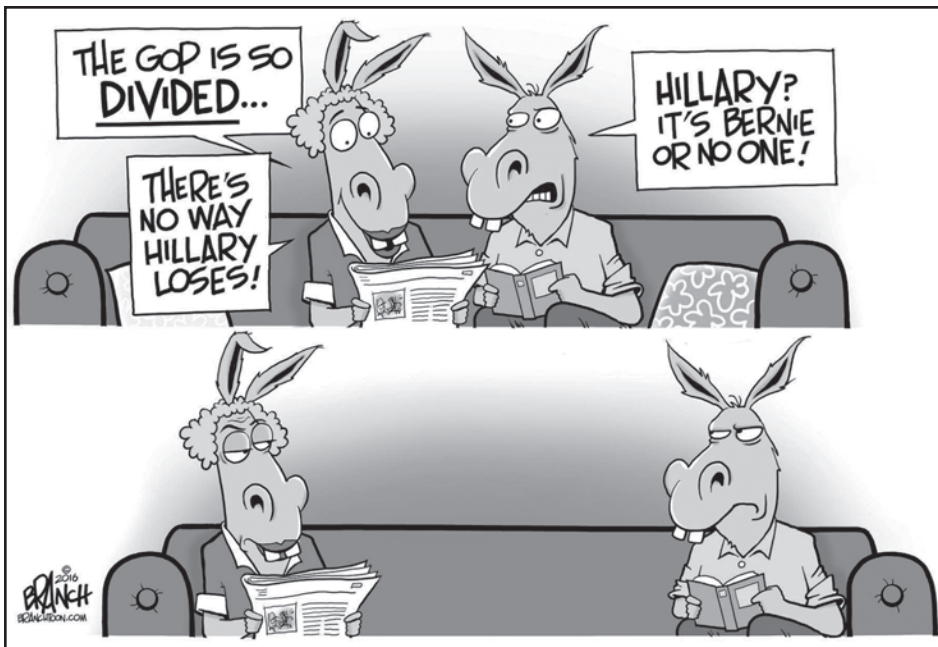
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Editorial

Wait ... What Was That?

By Randy Bailey

There's someone who's very close to me that I absolutely love to death, but he has a strange little idiosyncrasy. He's very intelligent, can speak on a myriad of subjects, can engage college professors and carnival workers equally in lengthy conversations and is a voracious reader. But he has no sense of his surroundings -- his immediate area. He's the guy who'll stop to talk at the optical desk at Sam's Club while leaving his cart blocking the aisle so no one else can get by. He'll pick up something from off a shelf and swing around almost knocking a family of six over in the process, never once being aware that there was a family of six so close they could tell whether he had shaved that day or not. It has gotten to the point that the most often thing I hear when we're out doing something is "Ahem" from other people. I've become his wingman, constantly pointing out, "You've got someone behind you;" "This guy needs to get through;" and in the extreme, "STOP!" It's said that the most consistent white trash final words are "Hey, watch this;" with my friend it's his look of incredulity and a shoulder shrug followed by, "What?"

I bring this up because the situation with my friend is not an isolated

incident. I wish it was. I bring this up because I'm seeing more and more people who are oblivious to their surroundings, especially when their surroundings appear to be the Madera Ranchos.

Case in point: I have a Facebook page for the Ranchos Independent. I try to keep it current both with information about the Ranchos and broader subjects that I find interesting and I assume others will find interesting as well. Sometimes I'm, right and get over 1,000 people taking a look; other times I get four people. You win some you lose some.

The other day I was checking my page and then went to one of the other Ranchos pages on Facebook and there it was. Someone was asking the question: "Hey, does anyone know what's going on at 12 and 41? It looks like they're building houses there."

Really? I mean, really?

I can understand people having different opinions about the appropriateness of the construction. I even understand people disseminating wrong information -- that appears to be just what they do. But to not even be aware that there's a development going in at 12 and 41 at this stage of the game? I'm speechless.

Today there was someone complaining about people driving 60 mph on Avenue 12 and someone else (from the Ranchos) couldn't understand because they thought the speed limit on 12 was 55. I said I guessed the 40 mph signs were there just as a "suggestion" and the conversation digressed from there.

The reason I bring this all up is there's an election coming up. It's an important one. I've gotten in trouble in the past by saying that people who aren't informed shouldn't vote, when what I'm REALLY saying is ... get informed. Read up on the candidates. Read about the propositions. Don't be that guy on June 7 who says, "Hey, did you hear there's an election today? Who you voting for?" And whatever you do don't use Facebook as your source for scholarly investigation into candidates and propositions. Funny little memes are a real hoot but the depths of the waters of their saliency would barely get your feet wet.

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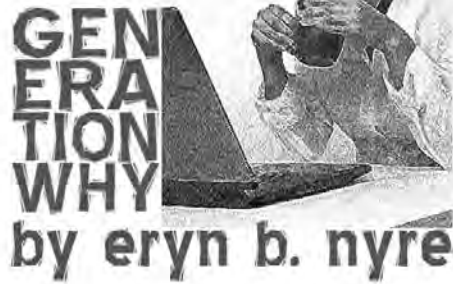
Work and Politics Mix - Not!

If there is one thing I hate about election year more than the incessant political attack ads, it is having to listen to my coworkers regurgitate those ads every single day as though they are gospel. I support free thinking and free speech but the truth is that unless you are working in politics or government (and sometimes even if you are) national politics are poison to office morale. I think it's best for everyone if they leave it at home or the coffee shop or the blog forum where it doesn't affect my job or my paycheck.

It would be great if people could actually freely exchange ideas and opinions everywhere, including their places of business, but we live in a lily-livered, yellow-bellied, giant whiny baby society where everyone gets offended over everything. A sense of humor is a thing of the past. You have to be extremely careful about what you say because if you upset the wrong group of people they will raise a hashtag activist army against you and get you blacklisted at every Starbucks and Whole Foods around the country. Free speech is not to be messed with ... just as long as you don't hold an opposing view or say something someone, somewhere might find offensive.

Honestly, the main motivation for keeping my mouth shut is because I am a Republican in a company (and an area) full of Democrats. I'm not ashamed of my political affiliation, but the minute I say I don't support Bernie the socialist or Hillary the she-devil then I must hate all immigrants and poor people. That label would be career suicide and I'd rather not become the office pariah.

I don't hate immigrants. I have no problem with legal immigration. You want to come to this country legally and abide by our laws, work and pay taxes then I welcome you. You know what I don't like? I don't like people sneaking across our borders, breaking our laws, stealing identities, not paying taxes, sending huge portions of the illegal cash they made under the table back across the border and then expecting to just get a free pass because they managed to avoid getting caught. Why does that make me a racist? I do not like illegal immigrants of any race or nationality. Whether from Canada or Mexico or France or the Ukraine, if you snuck in and broke



the law then I want to see you punished. That doesn't make me a racist, it makes me anti-criminal.

I don't hate poor people either. I think I speak for many Republicans when I say I don't want poor people to stay poor. I want them to get on their feet, succeed and do great things. What I don't want, however, is for the people who are poor due to consistently bad life choices to get a free ride off my hard work. Let's put programs in place that help the unfortunate help themselves. Let's not make it easier for Sally with her two children by two different men to have a third child so she can get more cash aid and a better Section Eight deal. I understand the desire to procreate, but let's stop pretending that children just happen. Having kids is a *choice*. If you cannot afford the one you have, make sure you don't have a second. Of course, if I say this to one of the Bernie supporters in the office who is super excited to get all the free things he keeps promising Americans if elected, then I'm a bad person who wants children to starve. Why is it that I'm a jerk for wanting to keep my own money to provide for my own family but Sally isn't a jerk for bringing in more mouths than she is capable of feeding? How is that reasonable?

With all the campaign ads and flyers everywhere you turn, people who otherwise keep their heads in the sand about what is happening in the country suddenly think they have a deep understanding of government. One woman at my work is an avid Hillary supporter because she is a woman. That's it. That's the basis of her support - oh that and she isn't Trump. Yes, Hillary Clinton is not, in fact, Donald Trump. Good catch. But ... you like her budget plan, her foreign aid policy, her experience

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

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This and That

By Betty Van Valkenburg

Make your vote count: Two important elections are coming up: The June 7 California presidential primary and the November 8 general election. You can make your votes count in two ways: 1. By making sure your votes aren't negated by a fraudulent system; and 2. By making informed choices after researching all candidates and propositions and then measuring them by your core principles.

If you would like to help make elections free from fraud and corruption, please visit the Election Integrity Project website at electionintegrityproject.com for information on past and potential fraud and to find out how to "... ensure that each vote is lawfully cast and accurately counted." One option is volunteering to be trained as a poll observer.

Ballot Measures: So far a few statewide ballot measures have qualified for the June and November ballots and a multitude of others are winding their way through the process to possibly become qualified. Add local measures to the total and it's clear that we need to start our homework by reading the propositions. For information, check out the California Secretary of State's website at www.sos.ca.gov/elections, or Ballotpedia.org/California, or your county clerk's office.

Conservative Conference: The American Principles Institute, formerly Sunbird Conservatives, will host "... the biggest conservative conference in California ..." on Saturday, May 21, at the Fresno Convention Center. Speakers will include Mark Levin, Dinesh D'Souza and Hugh Hewitt. Ted Cruz, John Kasich and Donald Trump have been invited. For information and to purchase tickets, please visit www.AmericanPrinciplesInstitute.org.

Celebration of Liberty: The Central Valley Tea Party will hold its second annual fundraiser dinner/dance/casino "Celebration of Liberty" May 13 at the Clovis Memorial District Building. Last year's event raised

\$10,000 for the Honor Flight and the local Tea Party hopes to raise even more this year. For information and ticket purchases, please visit www.CentralValleyTeaParty.com.

What Climate Change? For decades many concerned citizens and some courageous elected officials have warned of the global warming/climate change scam being used to justify the transformation of cities, counties and states to fit an international and United Nations agenda. The Paris Climate Agreement, which President Obama proposes to sign (at this writing) without the advice and consent of the Senate, is the latest in a long line of such agreements that pledge America's support of, and submission to, a global plan. According to the Heritage Foundation: "The pact commits Washington to regulate our economy even more heavily in the name of climate change, and it will seriously damage the American economy - sharply driving up energy costs, killing jobs and raising prices on virtually all consumer goods." Follow the money - billions of American dollars flowing to other countries as well as to favored "green energy" companies. I agree with Heritage: "The next president should withdraw the U.S. from this onerous agreement immediately upon taking office."

Meanwhile, attorneys general from several states, including California, and U. S. Attorney General Loretta Lynch seek to investigate and prosecute American companies and individuals who dare to question the reality of man-made climate change. Prosecution for expressing an opinion? This climate change crowd is getting serious! A good source of information and action items can be found at AmericanPolicyCenter.org, www.DemocratsAgainstUNAgenda21.com, and www.FreedomAdvocates.org.

And just for fun: Will the real Donald Trump please stand up? Ben Carson told us when he endorsed Donald Trump that there are two Donalds: The public one and the private one that is more "cerebral." Trump himself tells us that he will change now and become more presidential. So just for fun, I want to see the debate between Donald Trump number one and Donald Trump number two. Should be interesting.

For information and resources, please visit www.teapartypatriots.org.

GEN WHY cont. from P. 6

and background, right? You would think there was more to it, but no. That's all she ever says, she's ready for Hillary because she is ready for a woman.

I want to engage her further. I want to figure out how she makes life decisions without access to more

finely tuned critical thinking skills. But I can't, because the moment I speak up in the office it won't be about reasoned discourse or informed debate. No, it will be Eryn hates immigrants and poor people; Hillary for president because she's both a woman while also not being a man. Frankly I'm not sure I agree with her. I fear for our country.

Guess Who's Coming to Dinner?

Is it going to be Donald, Hillary, Ted, or Bernie or someone waiting in the wings? We don't have any idea who it will be, but at this point we all probably have our choices. I know one thing for sure, I wish they would get down to telling us how they would go about fixing the economy, getting the people back to work, or stopping ISIS instead of telling us what is wrong with each other.

After Nancy Reagan passed away, the news was showing pictures of her and President Reagan eating meals while they were home on their ranch and also pictures at state dinners. I had never given it much thought before, but I realized these people are much like us in that they eat three meals a day. So I got to thinking, what did our presidents eat?

On the internet I found the favorite food of each president. I thought it would be interesting to see how many you can guess. I think I would have a hard time with some of them without the answers in front of me.

I'm going to list some of the presidents' favorite foods, give you a hint and see how many you can get. I'll give you the answers at the end of the article. Good Luck!

A) Tenderloin with Jezebel sauce (apple jelly, pineapple preserves, horseradish, dry mustard and black pepper), corn cakes, lamb chops and fried apple pies.

Hint: He was first president to run on the Democratic ticket. He was very controversial – pro slavery.

B) Hot cereal, buttermilk, fried chicken, cornmeal dumplings with turnip greens, cornbread with sorghum molasses, candied carrots and sweet potatoes.

Hint: He was in office when Hillary Clinton (10/26/1947) and Donald Trump (6/14/1946) were born.

C) Macaroni and cheese, meat loaf, hamburger soup, roast beef hash, well done steak, swordfish, and baked apples.

Hint: He and his wife often ate their dinner on TV trays in front of the television. He loved jelly beans.

D) Roasted stuffed breast of



veal, beef stew, oxtail soup, chicken noodle soup, rare steak, corn pudding, string beans, succotash, fluffy turnips, and prune whip.

Hint: He was the first president I voted for. I was 17 when I graduated from high school in June, 1952 turned 18 in July, and voted for the first time in November.

E) Corned beef and cabbage, oatmeal, steak and eggs, brown bread, pickled herring and snicker doodles.

Hint: He was the only president to serve two terms not consecutively. He was our 22nd and 24th president.

F) Chicken and okra soup, pickled eggs, corn, oysters, popovers, seed cakes, gingerbread, ice cream and "Yard of Flannel" (mix rum, sugar, eggs and nutmeg together and pour hot ale over mixture).

Hint: He is known as Father of the Constitution because of his pivotal role in the documents drafting as well as its ratification.

G) Fresh fruit, avocados, gazpacho, cucumber mousse, cold poached salmon, cold shrimp and crab, cottage cheese, Rye Crisp, wheat germ, macadamia nuts, corned beef and cabbage, steak, spaghetti with meatballs, meat loaf and beef stroganoff.

Hint: One of only four presidents impeached while in office but he resigned his office before going to trial.

H) Squirrel stew, roast wild duck, apple cider, cornbread, cheese, and fresh vegetables.

Hint: First president to die in office. Died of pneumonia on the 32nd day in office, serving the shortest term in presidential history.

OK, let's see how you did:

- A)** Andrew Jackson #7
- B)** Harry Truman #33
- C)** Ronald Reagan #40
- D)** Dwight D. Eisenhower #34
- E)** Grover Cleveland # 22 & #24
- F)** James Madison #4
- G)** Richard Nixon #37
- H)** Wm. Henry Harrison #9

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Beethoven, Others Coming to Fresno

Pianist Michael Delfin is returning to his native Fresno for a recital of piano masterpieces. Praised for “Beautiful performances of great warmth,” -- *Classical Voice of North Carolina* -- Delfin will present a program of Scarlatti and Beethoven, and 19th-century virtuoso works. He will perform at the University Presbyterian Church on Sunday, May 22, at 4 p.m. Admission is free.



Pianist Michael Delfin is returning to his native Fresno for a recital of piano masterpieces and is bringing Beethoven and others with him.

to capturing top prizes in over a dozen international, national and state competitions.

Delfin recently completed graduate studies at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. Previously, he studied piano and composition at the Peabody Conservatory of Music and History at Johns Hopkins University as a Bloomberg Scholar. Delfin's teachers include Yoshikazu Nagai, Boris Slutsky and Fresno native Carol Oaks.

Delfin has soloed for the Kennedy Center Millennium Stage and numerous festivals across the country in addition

For more information, please visit www.michaeldelfinpianist.net.

Sunday, May 22, 4 p.m. • University Presbyterian Church
1776 E. Robert Ave. • Fresno, CA 93710

Program

Scarlatti: Three Sonatas • Beethoven: Sonata in D Major, Op. 10, No. 3
Sibelius: Impromptu No. 5 • Glinka/Balakirev: The Lark
Debussy: Minstrels and Clair de Lune • Liszt-Schumann: “Widmung”
Liszt: Paganini Etude No. 3 “La Campanella” and No. 6

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4/16



Don't Blame Me

Hello 93636,

The EPA recently announced that by 2021, all cars and light duty trucks sold in the U.S. must use a Global Warming Potential (GWP) refrigerant below 150. The new refrigerant is designed to reduce CO₂ in the earth's atmosphere and slow global warming according to global warming scientists. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) assigned the new R-1234yf refrigerant a GWP value of "4" while the automotive refrigerant used since 1994 (R-134A) was assigned a GWP value of 1,430.

The EPA's objective is to have the U.S. vehicle fleet not only equipped with R-1234yf for environmental reasons, but maintained with it as well. The R-1234yf systems have a very low capacity and are equipped with super-sealing connectors to prevent leaking. Loss of just a few ounces can reduce performance noticeably. The R-1234yf systems will contain between 8-16 ounces of refrigerant at \$200 per pound to service them.

An EPA spokesperson went on record saying, "If a professional technician knowingly installs R-134A into a R-1234yf system, that would constitute tampering with an emission control system and would be an obvious violation of the law."

Mercedes-Benz research has shown that during front impacts, when refrigerant R-1234yf escaped close to ordinarily hot parts, like an exhaust manifold, R-1234yf would ignite because it has a minor butane component. The chain of events that fol-

lowed allowed other components of the refrigerant to form very toxic substances.

Sometimes the situations we allow ourselves to be forced into to save Mother Earth are just plain ridiculous, potentially hazardous and dangerous. The earth's atmosphere contains about 78 percent nitrogen, 21 percent oxygen and 1 percent everything else. CO₂ is about .036 of the 1 percent of everything else. The CO₂ content in the earth's atmosphere would need to increase by 27 times its present value to become just 1 percent of the earth's atmosphere. CO₂ is what we humans exhale and is absolutely essential for green plants and certain other organisms to synthesize carbohydrates. The byproduct of that process is oxygen. CO₂ is NOT a hazardous emission. The modern vehicle primarily exhausts CO₂ and H₂O vapor.

Climate reconstruction models show concentrations of CO₂ in the earth's atmosphere have varied from about 17.5 times greater than present day amounts 500 million years ago, to about 2.2 times less than present day amounts 2 million years ago. If you are inclined to believe in climate modeling data, the data indicates the earth goes through natural cycles not caused by humans. According to evolution, *Australopithecines* (Lucy) didn't appear on earth until about 1/2 million years later.

Since the Industrial Revolution (1740-1860) life expectancy in the United States has changed dramatically from 25 years in the 1800s to 50 years in the 1900s to today's mean life span of about 75 years. Seems to me the industrial revolution and advancements in technology since have INCREASED quantity of life by increasing QUALITY of life.

God Bless 93636

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LETTERS cont. from P. 4

enue. County and State realizations of water unavailability has finally reached a point that this "can" can no longer be kicked down the road.

There is supposed to be a MD-10a rate payers oversight committee out here but five of the seven previously appointed members quit last spring and this community has been without an oversight committee – to be involved with the \$600,000 in expenditures per year or the actual management of our water system – for a year now. I request that any of you people concerned about flushing your toilets this August and in the future consider applying through Brett Frazier's office to be on the new MD-10a oversight committee that we as a community sorely need representing us. Brett Frazier could be more effective representing us if in fact we had a functioning oversight committee representing the best interest of the 1,000 rate payers for a positive change moving forward for a change.

Question: How can there be a quorum of four with a total of two? Where is the MD-10A oversight committee to represent the rate payers?

Water is more important in 2016 in this geographic area than ever before. Lack of participation has allowed this community water

system to be in the marginal condition that it is in and in debt by \$750,000.

Ten or 20 of you property owners that are rate payers of MD-10a that can step up and put forth some effort would make a difference. History shows that lack of participation failed this community with its water system. Involvement and participation has made some positive improvements and adjustments, even recently. Step up and work for the water for your community.

Brett Frazier's office is 559-662-6010.

Sincerely,

Chuck La Rue
Madera Ranchos

Dear Editor:

I belong to a group of local businessmen who are also independent automotive repair shop owners. Two months ago our group took a day trip to Simi Valley to visit the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library. First time for me. What an experience. On the bus trip down I entered into a conversation with one of the wives who is a teacher from another district. Since currently I am researching the California State Teachers Retirement System (CalSTRS), I took the opportunity to ask her if she had any concerns about her future retirement benefits given CalSTRS poor investment performance. She wasn't aware of any and seemed unconcerned. During the discussion she talked about her own situation. Since she is soon coming to her 30th year teaching anniversary, she scheduled a meeting with a CalSTRS retirement counselor. She discovered she was only six college units short of an advancement in her step and column pay and by adding those units she could substantially increase her retirement benefit. She made the decision to delay retirement until she advances in her pay schedule.

Initially the purpose for this letter was to make the argument for merit pay and argue against the current process of time served and higher education. During the writing of this letter, what she said suddenly CLICKED so I went to the California Public Employees' Retirement System (CalPERS) website and looked it up. She's correct; retirement benefits are predicated, in part, on the highest paid salary for up to 36 consecutive months. It seems our students serve as a Piggy Bank for the financial benefit of CalSTRS members. I will table the merit pay argument for another time.

As a result of our conversation, I came to a new realization. I now realize a Golden Valley Teachers Association (GVTA) salary increase is a double dip. It increases both current take home pay as well as increasing retirement benefits. It's "Pay me now AND pay me

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The 26th Annual Flatlanders Day is Almost Here!



The 26th Annual Flatlanders Day Parade, sponsored by the Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce, is coming Saturday, May 14 beginning at 10 a.m. The annual event showcases local groups, businesses and individuals from the Ranchos and beyond. The parade starts at 10 a.m. sharp and then there's a food and crafts fair at the Maywood Center sponsored by the Friends of the Ranchos Library that will last into the afternoon. Flatlanders Day is always celebrated on the second Saturday in May.

An entry form for the parade is found to the right of this article and applications for booths at the food and crafts fair are available at the Ranchos Library.



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2016 Flatlander's Day

Parade Day: Saturday, May 14, 2016 • \$10 Entry Fee

Group Individual Business

Group or Business Name _____

Individual Entry or Responsible Person's Name _____

Phone: _____

Address: _____

Theme of Entry: _____

Will youngsters walk with the entry? Yes No

Approx. number of participants _____ Approx. length _____ ft.

Entry Category (select ONE most closely suiting your entry):

Horses (Single) Horses (Group) Explain: _____

Band/Music Name: _____

Floats (Non-profit) Name: _____

Floats (Business) Name: _____

Floats (Other) Name: _____

Children's Groups Name: _____

Dance Groups Name: _____

Single Entry (Children) Name: _____

Single Entry (Adult) Name: _____

Novelty Name: _____

Additional information: _____

Parade begins at 10 a.m. sharp!

Registration of entries begins at 8:30 a.m.

Parade route: Ave. 12 from Topper to Kensington

The undersigned entrant and all participants agree to abide by all parade rules, follow the directions of parade officials and agree to release parade officials from any and all responsibility from loss, damage, and/or injury to any person or property as a result of participation in the parade.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Bring, fax or mail this form by **May 9** to: **Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce**
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Flatlanders is sponsored by the Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce, Ranchos Kiwanis and Friends of the Ranchos Library.

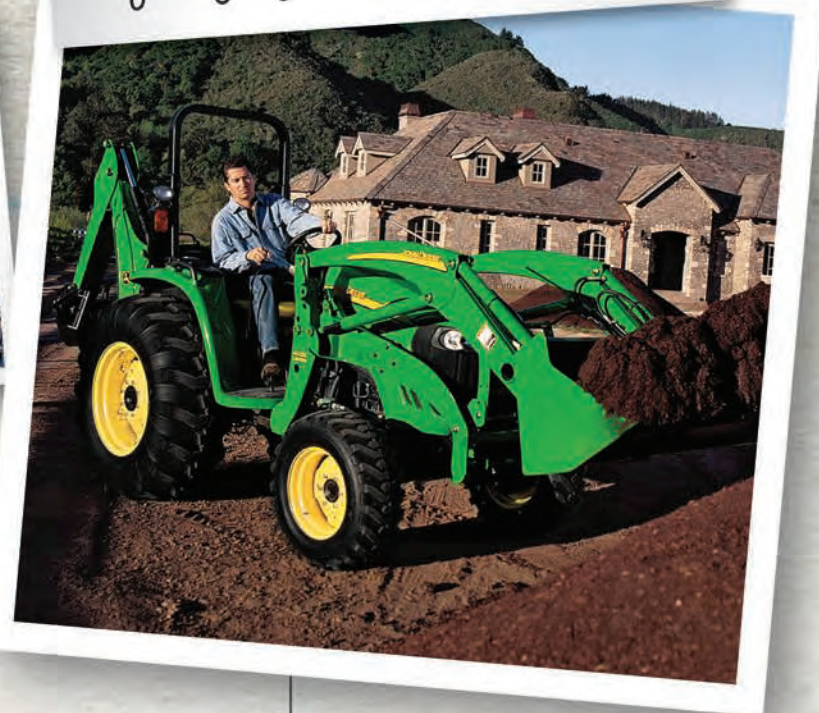
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The Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce would love to see you at our next meeting, always the second Wednesday of the month at 6:30 p.m., 37167 Ave. 12 Suite 5C in the Maywood Center. Come join us on May 11 and help plan the 26th Annual Flatlanders Day Parade. Call us at 645-4001.

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LETTERS cont. from P. 11

later." Now I understand why GVTA will not accept anything other than a salary pay raise as a qualified raise. Now I understand why during our Great Recession GVTA would not even consider a wage decrease to save the jobs of fellow teachers, maintain the level of course offerings and student programs. Now I understand why GVTA would only accept furlough days. A furlough day is NOT an unpaid day off. A furlough day accrues retirement benefits as though it is a regular work day. Now I understand that a decrease in salary might impede those retirement benefits. Now I understand why GVTA threw young teachers, our students and the district under the bus. GVTA's priority is to protect and grow their retirement benefits. Education in California is BIG, BIG BUSINESS and students are secondary to the money. NOW I UNDERSTAND!

During the Great Recession Clovis Unified School District (CUSD) employees accepted a 3 percent across the board salary decrease. As a result, no jobs were lost and no programs were cut. Students and employees benefited equally from their collective sacrifice. Seems to me most teachers and school district employees have a heart to serve. Clovis teachers are not represented by a public union so it was their choice to make. It was the opposite in GVUSD. GVTA made all the decisions. As a result, many teachers were laid off, instructional days were reduced, electives and programs were cut. In whose interest did GVTA truly serve? Low seniority teachers, our students and the district be damned; a short term reduction in salary is a bad business decision.

During last year's superintendent separation, the momentum toward Career Vocational Training (CVT) declined. Upon the superintendent's return, I asked if we could create a new CVT law enforcement course offering to increase student choices and re-establish some lost momentum. My reasoning

is simple: It's affordable, gender neutral and I think our students and community would support the program. After all, the California Department of Corrections is the largest employer in Madera County.

The superintendent came back with a concept. His idea is to provide space at Liberty High School to accommodate a sheriff's satellite office. That space would also serve as a classroom and in return the sheriff's office would teach a Law Enforcement class each day. That's what I like about Andy, he is creative and he thinks BIG. The additional benefit is each day a sheriff's deputy will be on the Liberty campus and within a 5-6 minute response time to all the district's school campuses. What a great concept. That idea has stalled due to time constraints. I'm sick and tired of GVTA labor negotiations dragging on and on. I'm sick and tired of our superintendent and board of trustees being overly occupied with labor negotiations instead of leading and growing our district. Time for a change.

In 2018, Proposition 30, a temporary tax to prevent \$6 billion in cuts to California schools, is set to expire. Additionally, GVUSD students have been excluded from California's supplemental funding (\$9.62 million each year) because our "At Risk" student numbers are too low. Currently we are in economic uncertainty and our economy is dependent on Federal Reserve's stimulus. GVTA continues to demand a Cost of Living raise, a raise that will once again place our young teachers and students at risk for layoffs. Will they ever learn? Why is GVTA negotiating counter to the best interest of all its members and students? As I have said, education is BIG BIG Business. Young teachers must be expendable in GVTA's view. It's all about the retirement double dip.

During the current negotiation process the new school board has held a hard line on spending. The board is attempting to replenish

Please see **LETTERS** on P. 16



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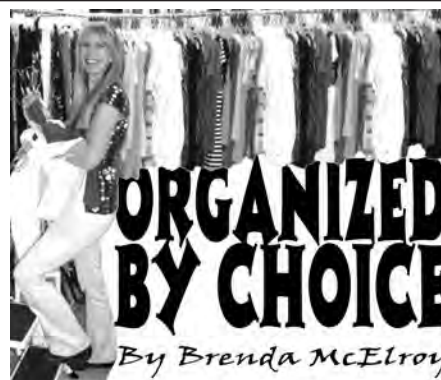
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4/16



By Brenda McElroy

We All Do It Sometimes

A few weeks ago I was preparing a presentation for the California Federation of Republican Women (CFRW) Central Division 2016 Leadership Training day (that's a mouthful!). My topic was time management and productivity. As I prepared, I became acutely aware of my own challenges in this area. I scheduled a full day to put together the presentation. Unfortunately, it wasn't enough. So, the next day when my daughter asked me to join her and the twins at the zoo, even though I had a cancellation, I had to decline. The night before

the presentation, my son and daughter-in-law came into town and I missed a family dinner since there were materials to gather and practicing to be done.

I don't regret the time and effort it took to prepare the presentation. The women responded to it enthusiastically.

But, had I done things differently, I could have produced an effective presentation and enjoyed some good times with family.

Looking back, I didn't schedule enough margin in my planning. Some might call this procrastination. Procrastination always comes with a price. If we procrastinate on paying our bills, we incur late fees. If we procrastinate on putting stuff away, we pay the price of living with clutter and chaos. If we procrastinate on a project at work, we pay the price of unsatisfactory work, or it costs us sleep or family time to get it done well. If we procrastinate on getting ready when we need to be somewhere, we experience stress while driving in a hurry and risk damaging relationships with those who are left waiting.

Think about the potential consequence of procrastination when you put off scheduling a mammogram, changing your oil, planning for retirement, preparing your taxes, or eating right and exercising. One of the reasons we procrastinate is that we don't consciously consider the consequences.

Lesson One: Envision the potential outcome of putting something off for later. Be mindful that you're making a choice and that

your choice has consequences. This gives your brain a chance to catch up with your emotions and have a say in whether you do what you feel like doing, or what might be best in the situation.

Lesson Two: Align your actions with your values. I don't know about you, but I never really "feel" like entering data in my QuickBooks, or saying no to snacking at night. It's easy to say "I'll do that tomorrow," but those things align with my values of maintaining good business records and a healthy body. When I link those things to my values, I don't necessarily enjoy them more, but it helps to boost my ability to take action.

Lesson Three: Care for your body. One thing I did do right that week was care for my body. I chose to not work late into the night, impairing my abilities and immune system. It was tempting, since I knew that if I didn't I'd have to give up something else. Our ability to make good choices, and to have the mental capacity to do our best is directly linked to our self-care. Alternatively, procrastinating stresses the mind and body and weakens the immune system.

Lesson Four:

Plan like a pessimist. Murphy's Law goes against my natural optimism but, when working with deadlines, it's better to plan for things to go wrong so it doesn't put you in a crunch if – or when – they do. Break down big projects into steps

and schedule deadlines along the way. This is also helpful if you feel overwhelmed by a big project or don't have the luxury of a large block of time to work on something. Set your final deadline a few days prior to the actual deadline.

Lesson Five: Think like a winner! Did someone assign you a task because they thought you were incapable of doing it? Is it impossible to eat a little less and exercise a little more? Of course not. The thing you're putting off may be hard, or scary, or boring, but you can do it. You are creative and resourceful.

So, what are you putting off right now? What are the consequences of procrastination or completion? How does it link to your values? How are you caring for your physical and mental health in order to be your best for this task? What steps are needed to accomplish it and what is your timeline? There's nothing to stop you now — go take action!

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

LETTERS cont. from P. 14

ish the district's budget surplus and build a rainy day fund. Doing so will protect all the district's employees and students from disruptive layoffs in the case of a financial crisis. GVTA leadership wants the money. They are in no danger of being laid off, they have seniority. As a result of the board's resistance to incur more on-going debt, GVTA has obtained the services of the California Teachers Association (CTA) regional representative to

negotiate on their behalf. I resent GVTA for bringing this carpetbagger into our district to plunder our financial resources and negotiate against the best interests of our students. GVTA is playing hardball and once again negotiations drag on and on and on. By the way, let our new school board members know you support them.

At every turn GVTA is in the way. GVTA is the big anchor that holds our district back. Without a doubt, they are the greatest impediment to student opportunity and dis-

trict growth. Since my epiphany, I have modified my position with regard to implementing a big business attitude in GVUSD. I no longer see any redeeming value in our present system, just greed. For me, the better position is to replace our broken system and install a new model. I think our teachers, newest teachers for sure, would be better served if we decertify GVTA and provide them the opportunity to collectively bargain in their own best interests like CUSD. Their interests have been misrepresented long enough. It's time to run

BIG business and their carpetbaggers out of GVUSD. It's time to take our district back and return education to the business of education.

During the 1998 campaign to separate the Madera Ranchos area from Madera Unified School District, "More Local Control" became the campaign slogan. Time to dust it off and make it a reality once again.

God Bless 93636,

Warren Parr
Madera Ranchos

Senior Report

Seniors Dedicating Flag Pole to Barrow

By Patti Groh

Back in 1998, a local article was written by Robert Adams entitled "Ranchos Seniors Raise Flag Pole." It was reporting on a momentous happening at the Ranchos/Hills Senior Center. The physical building of the Center had just opened in April of that year, but the first organizing meeting of the Seniors was held at Pete's Drive-In in 1989 and Jim Barrow was elected the first president. After that original meeting, the Seniors met at private homes/yards, sometimes in a church or Webster School. You can imagine the joy when the center opened.



First Ranchos/Hills Senior Center President Jim Barrow will finally get his flag pole dedicated.

By then, Jim Barrow was gone and it was decided to put up a flag pole in his memory. What a group effort it was! The pole itself was found in a Caltrans junk yard by Gerald Lackey (Barrow's brother-in-law) and cost just \$30. Lackey and senior Bob Vanderslice poured concrete for the pole to sit in. The owner of Madera Disposal Systems, Charles Youngclaus, then donated the services of his crane and with the added muscle power of Lackey, Tom Mullins, Mel Carlson, Phil Carter and Merle Anderson, the 34-foot flag pole went up. Barbara Vanderslice had been able to get a promise from Congressman George Radanovich to be given a flag that had flown over the nation's capital. It hadn't arrived by Aug. 24, but the Seniors planned on having a celebration when the flag did arrive, complete with a plaque denoting that the flag pole was in memory of the first president, Jim Barrow. Unfortunately, at that time the plaque was not obtained. However, I am happy to report at this time that, along with the sprucing up of the area around the flag pole, a plaque is on order and the long-

awaited recognition will be noted.

Members of the Ranchos/Hills Seniors will be participating in the Flatlanders Parade on May 14. If you're a member and have a golf cart that can be used, please leave a message for Carol Wood at the Center. We'll have a booth at Flatlanders Day and will be giving out information, selling plants and boutique pretties. We can always use more contributions of these items. Bring them to the Center any time it's open.

The May birthday lunch will be at the Japanese Kitchen in Clovis on May 21. Sign-up sheet will be at the Center.

Happy Mother's Day to the all the moms, grandmothers and great-grandmothers (and great-greats, wow) on May 8.

All the usual activities will be happening in May: the first Saturday sale, exercise, games, potluck on Thursdays, poker and weekday lunches. All the dates and times are in the Newsletter available at the Center and local businesses. The Center will be CLOSED on Memorial Day.

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Sober Grad Needs Your Help!

Parents of LHS Students and Our Community

What: Sober Grad 2016 • **When:** Thursday, June 2nd

Where: Liberty High School Cafeteria/Theater

The Sober Grad committee is working hard to plan a fabulous night for the 2016 Graduates. To make this event a success, the Liberty High Senior Class depends on the volunteer time and efforts of many community parents. Ideally the events on the evening of Sober Grad are handled by the parents of the Junior Class so that parents of graduating seniors can be free to be with their children on their big day.

Senior parents are more than welcome to volunteer and in the past have made up the majority of Sober Grad volunteers, but help from Junior Class parents will allow them to enjoy the night of celebration with their graduating Senior.

How can you help?

Parents are needed to help support this event with their time, manpower and donations. We have a tax ID number so it's even Tax Deductible!

Donations of items and/or gift cards can be brought to our Sober Grad Booth at the Flatlander's Parade on May 14th or dropped off with Suzie Fender at LHS.

If you have any questions, please contact:

Stephanie Workman (559) 709-1477

Diana Mendoza (559) 355-6109

4/16

Thank you for your support, Sober Grad Committee 2016



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

The Bookshelf

It's Time to "Get Caught Reading"

By Amanda Judd

Spring is in full bloom and the library is buzzing with activity. Saturday, May 14 is the annual Flatlanders Day. There are still some vendor booths available for the Craft Fair. The Flatlanders Craft Fair will be held in the Maywood Shopping Center. If you are interested in being a vendor, don't wait until it's too late. These spaces will be filled on a first come, first served basis. If you are interested in being a vendor, please contact the library. Vendor booth applications will be sent via email and there are some printed packets available for pick up in the library during regu-

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www.MaderaCountyLibrary.org

lar operating hours. Craft Booths are \$40 and Food Booths are \$60. Payment is required at the time the application is submitted. Madera County Environmental Health procedures will be strictly enforced for all food vendors.

May is officially "Get Caught Reading Month," a nationwide campaign to remind people of all ages how much fun it is to read. Launched in 1999, it's supported by the Association of American Publishers. When you attend the Flatlanders Craft Fair, stop by the Friends of the Rancho Library Book Sale and stock up on books. You can make the celebration last through the whole year. So grab some books, support your library and see if you can get caught reading.

May 2-8 is also Children's Book Week. Children's Book Week originated in the belief that children's books and literacy are

life-changers. In 1913, Franklin K. Matthews, the librarian of the Boy Scouts of America, started traveling around the country to promote increased standards in children's books. He proposed creating a Children's Book Week.

Matthews enlisted two important allies: Frederic G. Melcher, the visionary editor of Publishers Weekly, and Anne Carroll Moore,

the Superintendent of Children's Works at the New York Public Library and a major figure in the library world. With the help of Melcher and Moore, in 1916, the American Booksellers Association and the American Library Association sponsored a Good Book

Week with the Boy Scouts of America.

In 1944, the newly-established Children's Book Council assumed responsibility for administering Children's Book Week. In 2008, Children's Book Week moved from November to May. At that time, the program was transferred to Every Child a Reader, a 501(c)(3) literacy non-profit dedicated to instilling a lifelong love of reading in children, and the Children's Book Council became a Children's Book Week sponsor.

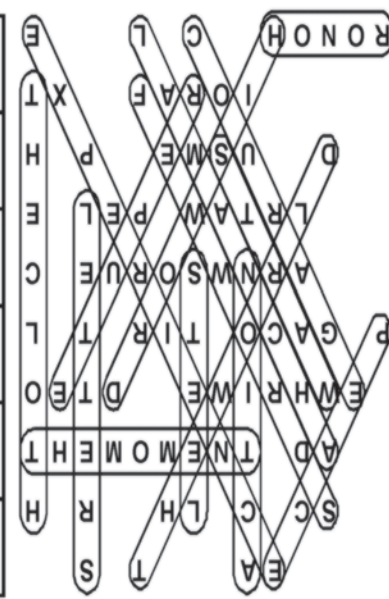
The need for Children's Book Week today is just as valuable as it was in 1919. The Rancho Library loves to see children fall in love with a good series and be excited about the publishing of a new picture book. We love to share Frederic Melcher's fundamental declaration: "A great nation is a reading nation."

ANSWERS

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FREE WELL cont. from P. 2

(O&M) of the new well, if located within the MD-10a boundary, would be about \$27,000 annually, raising the overall O&M of the consolidated system to about \$537,000 annually. And since annual revenue from MD-10a ratepayers is about \$650,000, a surplus of \$113,000 would be achieved and could be used to pay off the \$750,000 loan for the Dublin Well, resulting in no need to raise rates or hold a Proposition 218 vote. The County had determined no further requests or approvals were necessary and the March 30 meeting was primarily an FYI for those in attendance to be the first to get the good news that MD-10a would get a new supply well at no cost, increasing system capacity by about 25 percent and add system redundancy by one well, from four to five.

As the 30 VTR residents learned, even though the project price tag has increased to \$3.4 million, there will be no cost to them or their benefactors either, since they are considered a disadvantaged community — at least by the State.

Other Projects

Those in attendance at the March 30 meeting also got to hear updates on two other projects: The estimated \$15.5 million project to replace MD-10a water system pipes and install 900 water meters, and the project to consolidate the water system at Liberty High School with MD-10a.

Regarding the pipeline replacement and meter installation project, the County reported that the project still does not qualify for any grant funding since there is no disadvantaged community aspect. The 2010 Census showed the median household income in the Ranchos was \$75,480, well above the \$49,191 necessary to qualify as disadvantaged. Secondly, the low interest loan the State would provide would cost ratepayers an extra \$83 per month per connection for 20 years, which would not likely be approved in a Proposition 218 vote. Finally, the County reported it would next begin an O&M cost rate study for the project. Supervisor Frazier said there are alternatives to the \$15.5 million installation plan to get new piping and meters installed using less expensive construction methods that have been developed and used in recent years.

Regarding the Consolidation of Golden Valley Unified School District's water system at Liberty High School, including its 1-million-gallon storage tank with MD-10a, newly appointed Public Works Director Ahmad Alkayat expressed confidence that it would go forward, particularly since the State has also declared the project eligible for full grant funding, due to one of the High School's well's containing arsenic. The County's ongoing evaluation of this second consolidation project will be completed subsequent to the VTR consolidation project, the County said.

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GO FIGURE! by Linda Thistle

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

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SUDOKU
by Linda Thistle

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Just Like Cats & Dogs

by Dave T. Phipps



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ARIES (March 21 to April 19) Temper your typical Aries urge to charge into a situation and demand answers. Instead, let the Lamb's gentler self emerge to deal with a problem that requires delicacy.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20) You are aware of what's going on, so continue to stand by your earlier decision, no matter how persuasive the counter-arguments might be. Money pressures will soon ease.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20) By all means, have fun and enjoy your newly expanded social life. But don't forget that some people are depending on you to keep promises that are very important to them.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22) You need to wait patiently for an answer to a workplace problem and not push for a decision. Remember: Time is on your side. A financial matter needs closer attention.

LEO (July 23 to August 22) You now have information that can influence that decision you planned to make. But the clever Cat will consult a trusted friend or family member before making a major move.

VIRGO (August 23 to September 22) Good news: You're finding that more doors are opening for you to show what you can do, and you don't even have to knock very hard to get the attention you're seeking.

LIBRA (September 23 to October 22) Your gift for creating order out of chaos will help you deal with a sudden rush of responsibilities that would threaten someone less able to balance his or her priorities.

SCORPIO (October 23 to November 21) Congratulations. Your energy levels are coming right back up to normal -- just in time to help you tackle some worthwhile challenges and make some important choices.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22 to December 21) The sage Sagittarian should demand a full explanation of inconsistencies that might be cropping up in what had seemed to be a straightforward deal.

CAPRICORN (December 22 to January 19) A conflict between obligations to family and to the job can create stressful problems. Best advice: Balance your dual priorities so that one doesn't outweigh the other.

AQUARIUS (January 20 to February 18) Don't guess, speculate or gossip about that so-called mystery situation at the workplace. Bide your time. An explanation will be forthcoming very soon.

PISCES (February 19 to March 20) Boredom might be creeping in and causing you to lose interest in a repeat project. Deal with it by flipping over your usual routine and finding a new way to do an old task.

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"We find that being locked up together in the same room is cruel and unusual punishment!"

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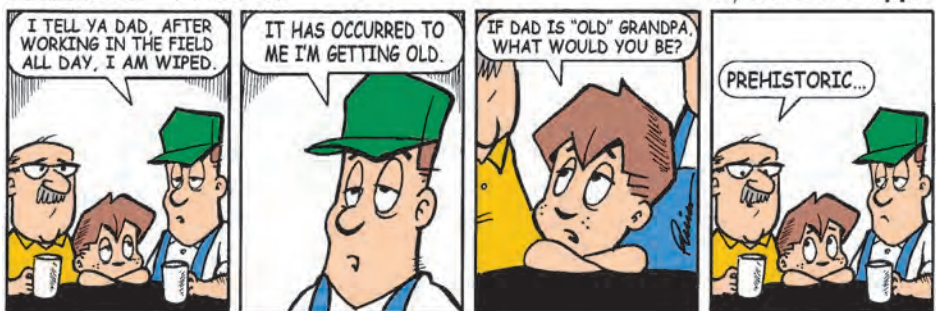
Born this Week

You can warm the coldest heart with your lyrical voice and bright smile. You find yourself at home, wherever you are.

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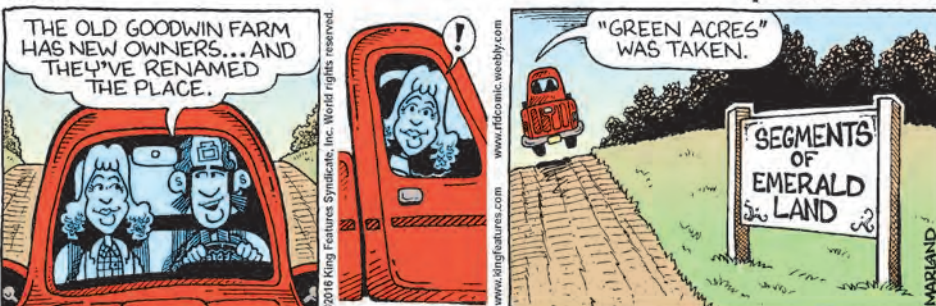
Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps



R.F.D.

by Mike Marland



Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas



The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



Intelligent Life

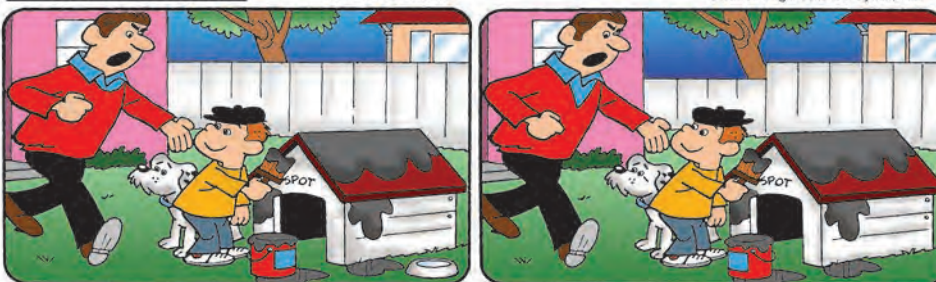
by David Reddick



HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF

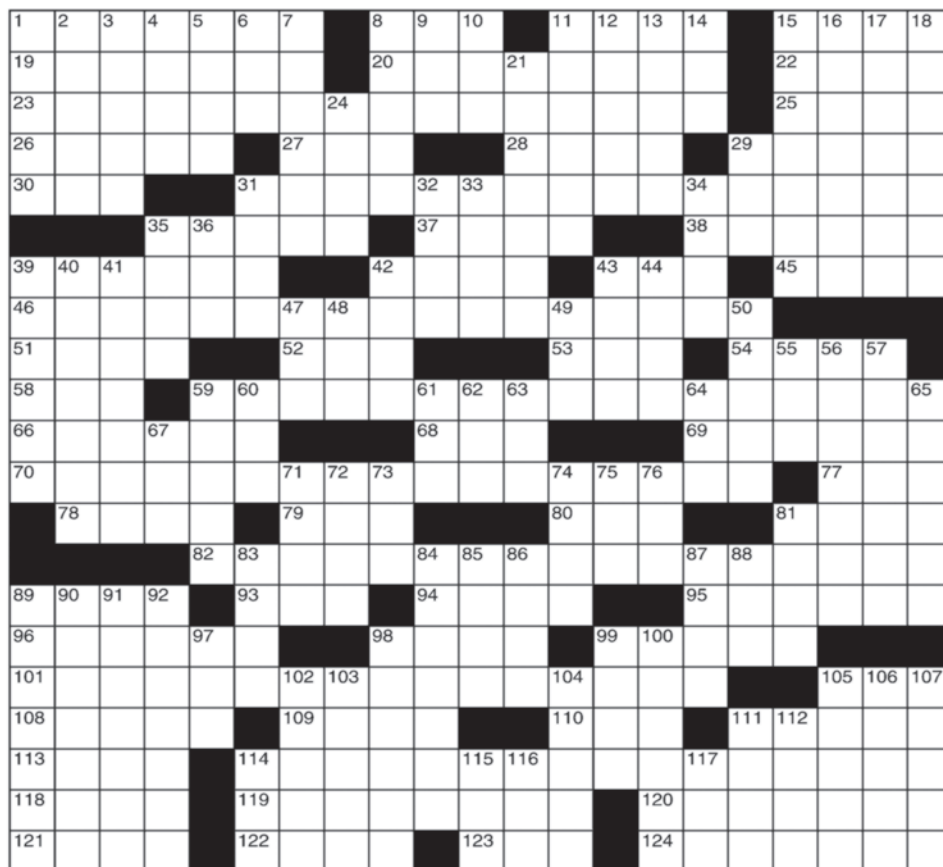
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Find at least six differences in details between panels. Differences: 1. Arm is missing. 2. Neckline is different. 3. Fence section is lower. 4. Cap is reversed. 5. Paint can is reversed. 6. Dish is missing.

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Super Crossword



- ACROSS**
- 1 Place a call incorrectly
 - 8 "Alley —!"
 - 11 — toe in the water
 - 15 Spat
 - 19 1979 Michael Caine film
 - 20 Sergeant's inferior
 - 22 Arab leader
 - 23 Had a different opinion
 - 25 Court plea, for short
 - 26 — the Greek (1964 film)
 - 27 Average mark
 - 28 French department
 - 29 Ax parts
 - 30 Mel of the old Giants
 - 31 1954 hit song with a biblical title
 - 35 Cyberspace letters
 - 37 Sigh of satisfaction
 - 38 Lott of football
 - 39 Valued highly
 - 42 "The Thing" star Russell
 - 43 Lose vigor
 - 45 Ship out
 - 46 Career-completion celebrations
 - 51 Canadian station name
 - 52 Spanish arena cry
 - 53 A — (slightly haughtiness)
 - 54 "So it's you!"
 - 59 Bank offering for creditworthy customers
 - 66 Focuses in college
 - 68 Kochi sash
 - 69 Quarterback Troy
 - 70 Like some high-quality models
 - 77 "I'm cold!"
 - 78 Bidding site
 - 79 180 degrees from SSE
 - 80 — Lingus
 - 81 Film director Kazan
 - 82 Formation of new areas of oceanic crust
 - 89 Mane locale
 - 93 In the past
 - 94 Minimal tide type
 - 95 Sudden pain
 - 96 Oblong pastry
 - 98 Bards' dusks
 - 99 Weight revealer
 - 101 Trainers looking for pins
 - 105 Clumsy ship
 - 108 Ticket details
 - 109 Regular pay
 - 110 Stable scrap
 - 111 "Along — spider ..."
 - 113 With 11-Down, settled for
 - 114 Takes a defensive position
 - 118 New — (Enya type)
 - 119 Kiss
 - 120 Divert
 - 121 Actors Beatty and Sparks
 - 122 Bodega, e.g.
 - 123 Profs' helpers
 - 124 Any of four long pairs featured in this puzzle
 - 8 Band of eight
 - 9 Sound of awe
 - 10 Med lead-in
 - 11 See 113-Across
 - 12 Dubliners, e.g.
 - 13 1990s Toyota
 - 14 Bar brew
 - 15 Bone attachments
 - 16 Coca of comedy
 - 17 Enters one following another
 - 18 Iced
 - 21 Like some even distributions
 - 24 Eye, to Yves
 - 29 Inflated self
 - 31 Walk in shallow water
 - 32 — monde (high society)
 - 33 Old West's Wyatt
 - 34 Hankering
 - 35 Italian opera singer Pinza
 - 36 Debussy's "La —"
 - 39 Piece of audiophile equipment, briefly
 - 40 Divvy up again
 - 41 "This pays the rent, at least"
 - 42 Leg part
 - 43 Sirius, say
 - 44 Adjutant
 - 47 "Li'l ol' me?!"
 - 48 Shade tree
 - 49 Artery: Abbr.
 - 50 Composer Erik
 - 55 Nettle
 - 56 "— Rose" (Nat King Cole hit)
 - 57 Eyeballing
 - 59 Victimized, with "on"
 - 60 Blog feed inits.
 - 61 Electrojet bit
 - 62 Heat's org.
 - 63 Up to, informally
 - 64 Downcast
 - 65 Anger greatly
 - 67 One — kind
 - 71 Hose hitch
 - 72 Lowdown
 - 73 Barn hooter
 - 74 Shocked reaction
 - 75 Sales staffer
 - 76 Opp. of departure
 - 81 Falco of "Oz"
 - 83 English peer
 - 84 Amoeba composition
 - 85 Wine: Prefix
 - 86 Tabula —
 - 87 Greek vowels
 - 88 Pointed tool
 - 89 Ted Koppel, for one
 - 90 Area of a plot of land
 - 91 Petitioned
 - 92 Events after Lents
 - 97 Cheez- — (crackers)
 - 98 Breakfast china item
 - 99 Old Iranian VIP
 - 100 Et — (and so forth)
 - 102 "In my dreams!"
 - 103 Stupor: Prefix
 - 104 Fowl sheds
 - 105 "My Cherie —"
 - 106 Oscar de la —
 - 107 Casey of countdowns
 - 111 Irene of "Fame"
 - 112 Awestruck
 - 114 Trig function
 - 115 Have chow
 - 116 RR depot
 - 117 — Ho Lee (scientist in 2000 headlines)

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