

# The Ranchos Independent



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**CELEBRATING  
19 YEARS  
IN THE RANCHOS**

Volume 18 Issue 12 2022

The Official Publication of Southeastern Madera County

50¢



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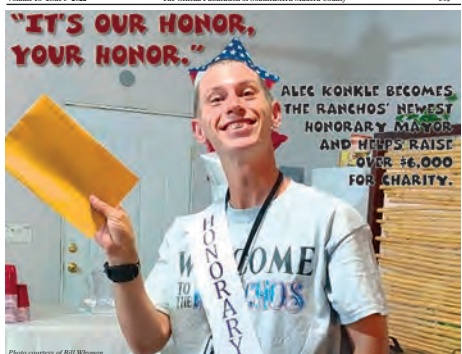
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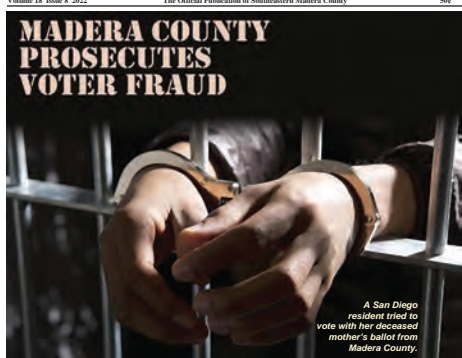
## Looking Back: Taking a look back at the top stories in the Ranchos for 2022



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**In This Issue**

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# Murder-Suicide and Armed Robbers in the Ranchos? Believe it or Not

By Randy Bailey

In a four-day period, the typically peaceful Madera Ranchos experienced a murder-suicide and a group of armed robbers moving throughout the Bonnadelle Ranchos.

On Tuesday, Dec. 6, Madera County Sheriff's deputies were called to a home on Avenue 12 near Road 33 around 1:25 p.m. to perform a "welfare check." Also known as a "wellness check," the process is carried out when law enforcement stops by a person's home to make sure they are okay. Usually requested by friends, family and neighbors, they are typically sought when someone unexpectedly stops answering his or her phone or becomes incapable of being contacted. When the deputies ar-

rived, they found a man and a woman dead inside the house.

On Wednesday, the Madera County Sheriff's Office identified the victims as Monty Bounds, 60, and his wife Julie Bounds, 58. They further said that each person suffered a single gunshot wound, however they did not know how long the couple had been dead before they were found by deputies. Madera County Sheriff Tyson Pogue confirmed that the deaths appeared to be the result of continuous domestic violence that spiraled rapidly into a murder-suicide. In a news conference, Sheriff Pogue said neither the confiscating of Monty Bounds' guns or the emergency protective order Julie Bounds had obtained prevented the tragedy. In their case, law enforcement issued an emergency protective

order against Monty Bounds on Oct. 30 following his arrest. He was arrested again the next day on Oct. 31 and deputies were given a "non-release" order and a bail enhancement to keep him away from Julie Bounds. Monty Bounds fought with deputies during one of his arrests and had to be tased. After all of this, he was released on Nov. 4 by a Madera County Judge, complete with a "no-contact" order and an order banning him from having any guns. Sadly,

he was still able to get a gun – that wasn't registered to him – and killed his wife.

The couple had been married for 10 years.

Just four days later, on Saturday, Dec. 10, people in the Bonnadelle Ranchos neighborhood around Road 37 and Avenue 16 heard something rarely heard in the Ranchos: Police helicopters overhead looking

Please see **CRIME** on P. 15



## Annual Community Tree Lighting

*The Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce brings the community together for this annual event, but its real purpose is to remember our veterans at Christmas time.*

*The Christmas Tree lighting is sponsored by the Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce.*

*Treats, treats and more treats! Local groups brought the sweets for free.*

*The Sierra Shadows 4-H Club brought crafts for people to construct.*

*The big man himself found out what moms and dads wanted as well as the kids.*

*The Madera County American Legion sent the honor guard and official tree lighters.*

*... and did we mention treats? There was also hot chocolate and coffee.*

## 2022 • Top Ranchos Stories

*from the pages of the Ranchos Independent*

- 1 Crime Burst in the Ranchos/December** • Safety is one of the great features of the Ranchos. So what are you supposed to think when in a four-day period we have a murder-suicide and a band of armed robbers running through our community? So far it doesn't look like a trend, just an aberration.
- 2 Somber Reminder/June** • We had a somber reminder of just how tenuous our safety and liberty actually are when a piece of the twin towers drove through the Ranchos to a 9/11 monument being built in Madera. Those massive buildings reduced to rubble in minutes. Never forget.
- 3 Increased Wrecks/July, September** • Unfortunately, automobile wrecks seem to be increasing in the Ranchos, along with their severity. In September two people died in a 48-hour stretch on local roads and a wreck in July on Avenue 12 was described as "grisly."
- 4 Crab is Back!/March** • One of the worst parts of the Covid scare was its disruption of our lives. After a one year absence, in March the Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce rolled the dice and brought back its annual Crab Feed. It was a huge success, in part from all the "stir crazy" Ranchos folks.
- 5 Election/April, June, September** • Every two years it's election time, and while national politics are important, it's local elections that often have the most impact. From school board members to county supervisors to judges, the local elections are the embodiment of the American process.
- 6 People Don't Care/June** • The other side of the election issue is the lack of involvement, being only 51% in the last election. The most interesting statistic would be to see what percentage of non-voters complain about issues on which they didn't bother to vote.
- 7 Madera Prosecutes Voting Crime/August** • These are interesting times. If you questioned an election, you got labeled a "denier" and had the veracity of the election pounded into your head. And yet, Madera County found someone cheating and prosecuted them. Interesting.
- 8 Ranchos Girl Wins Miss Clovis/November** • For the second time in recent memory, a Ranchos girl has won a potential spot at the future Miss America pageant. Heavenly Carrillo grew up here but is going to San Joaquin Memorial high school. She tried out and won!
- 9 Honorary Mayor/ May** • Speaking of elections ... it's honorary so it really doesn't mean anything; once elected you can't really do anything, and all your votes are bought - just a dollar a vote. But Alec Konkle raised money for the LHS band and that's a pretty good thing.
- 10 Super Quiz Champs/February** • For the first time, a group of students from Liberty High School earned first place honors in the Academic Decathlon Super Quiz. Not only did they ace the quiz, they also had the highest medal count with a total of 42 medals. Can you say ... *BIG* brains?

**all stories can be found at**  
**[www.TheRanchos.com](http://www.TheRanchos.com)**

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# THANK YOU, MADERA COUNTY!

To my neighbors,

Thank you for placing your trust, and your vote, in me. Since launching my candidacy in January, I've talked to thousands of Madera County residents sharing my vision for a safer, stronger community.

**Now, it's time to get to work.**

It is my honor to take on the challenges and deliver victories for our community with a strong focus on keeping our community safe and thriving.

From my family to yours, wishing you a Merry Christmas and safe, happy holiday season.



MADERA COUNTY SUPERVISOR-ELECT



## JORDAN WAMHOFF

MADERA COUNTY SUPERVISOR

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Letters

Dear Editor:

In response to your "Guest Editorial," by Joseph Enders, midterm results show many are onto the hypocrisy of the GOP.

First, they try to repeal the Affordable Care Act, the only halfway affordable healthcare option for many sole proprietors, while using our tax dollars to fund government healthcare and pensions. We pay for their benefits, while they try to take ours away. All of this is before MAGA turned a blind eye to seditious actions of Trump after the 2020 election.

More hypocrisy: claiming to care about law enforcement and democracy while inciting violence against both on January 6, 2021. MAGA may be blind to it, but a majority of Americans are not. We are comfortably woke.

As for MAGA caring more about power than democracy, in addition to January 6, they fight to protect history curriculum written by racists, misogynists and xenophobic men who skipped or minimized contributions by anyone who was not a WASP. Our Founding Fathers, in addition to many owning slaves, denied the right to vote for women, anyone who wasn't a white male, at least 21 years old, and a property owner. Thomas Jefferson also sired children with at least one of his slaves. DNA proved this in 1998. These are facts of our history. Is any of this taught in American History today?

MAGA Republicans are delusional and everyone else knows it. A majority of Americans "get" that MAGA are seditious extremists, willing to use violence to impose their beliefs on others. They do not represent a majority of Americans, or even

moderate Republicans. REPUBLICAN Ronald Reagan legalized abortion in California in 1967; REPUBLICAN Richard Nixon created the EPA in 1970. How many MAGA Republicans support those policies today? Not that Ronald Reagan was enlightened: he removed solar panels Jimmy Carter had installed on White House to the cheers of fossil fuel lobbyists. How many MAGA Republicans have embraced mainstreaming of renewable energy, like solar panels, while voting GOP? In turn, GOP acts to kill financial incentives for renewables because they are beholden to donors and suppliers of old and dirty energy sources like coal. Another example of the GOP allowing MAGA to shoot themselves in the foot with their inability to see the detrimental effects of their choices.

Bring on the enlightenment. Every respectable person wants to be a contributor to our country and world. We also expect to get the benefits we pay for; the same benefits that government workers get with our tax dollars. Private sector is 87 percent of our economy and small businesses are 44 percent. We're not buying the hypocrisy of preaching self-sufficiency while taking government jobs, handouts and tax breaks. For proof, look no further than source of your Guest Editorial: ChurchMilitant.com, a "501(c) corporation." Writing political propaganda while claiming tax exempt status of a religious organization. Typical MAGA hypocrisy.

Yes, mind boggling hypocrisy is sometimes entertaining, but it's usually just nauseating.  
Cheryl Harvat  
Bonadelle Ranchos

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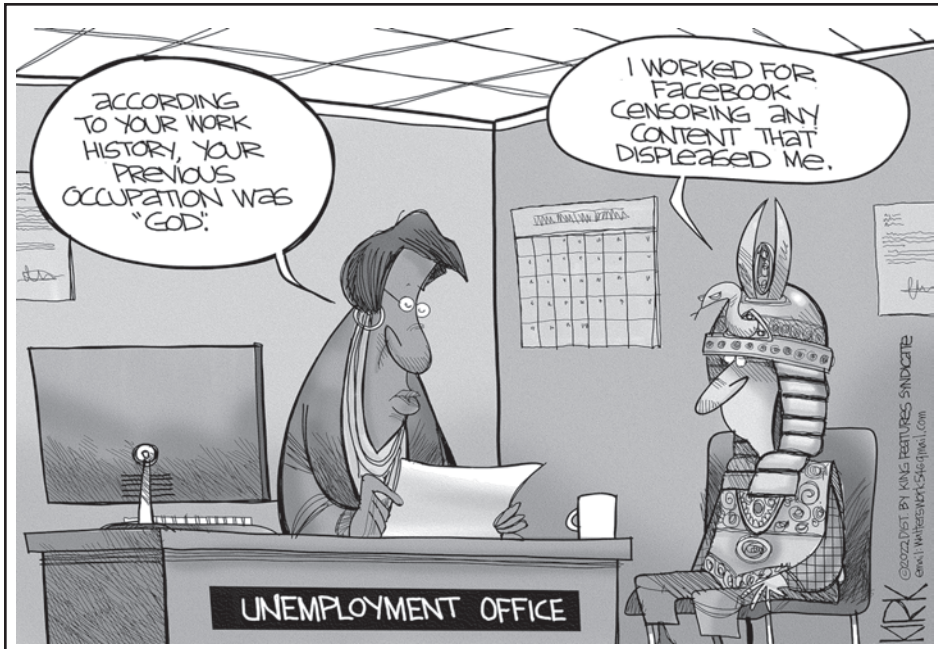


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## Editorial

# And "They" Said it Wouldn't Last

By Randy Bailey

Every year in December I pretty much write the same editorial. It's not really an editorial as much as it's a trip down memory lane. In December of 2003, a business partner and myself bought the Ranchos Independent. She and I had just been let go from Western Ag Publishing in Fresno and she wanted to go find a job. I told her that combined, she and I had been running the publishing company we were working at for the last five years. Why not do it for ourselves? The word had gotten to us that the owner of the Ranchos Independent was looking to sell and after some negotiations, we bought it.

Even though I had a degree in Journalism from Fresno State, the vast part of my adult working life had been spent in sales. Her background was in design and layout so combined we had just about everything you needed to run a publication. We worked together for the next few years but there came a point where we just needed to go our separate ways. We split up our holdings and I got the Ranchos Independent. Today she has a government job up in Washington state.

As I've written in the past, it's hard to believe that 19 years later we're still plugging away at it here at the Ranchos Independent.

In the movie "Roadhouse" (my all-time favorite *BAD* movie), the recur-

ring joke is people telling Dalton, the lead bouncer at a miserable bar played by Patrick Swayze, "I thought you'd be bigger." To which Dalton responds, "Gee, I've never heard that before."

That's my headline. Almost from the beginning, wellwishers (?) told me that they were glad to see that the paper was being bought, but they didn't really expect to see it last. The Fresno Bee was downsizing, newspapers across the country were closing down, this new thing called "the internet" seemed to be taking the place of physical newspapers ... blah, blah, blah.

As I've said before, I did my research (*AFTER* I bought the paper ... gulp!) and I found out "they" were right about the L.A. Times and the San Francisco papers and the Fresno Bee. Right on the money. But what my research also showed me and "they" missed over and over again, was that small town newspapers mostly were doing great. Making people rich? No. But it appeared that all the stories that the bigger papers covered were much more important than someone's son earning his Eagle Scout rank. Or someone's daughter starting a local shelter for abandoned animals. Or a local organization that was specializing in helping people whose loved ones were suffering from Alzheimers.

But a *local* paper could do all of that. And has.

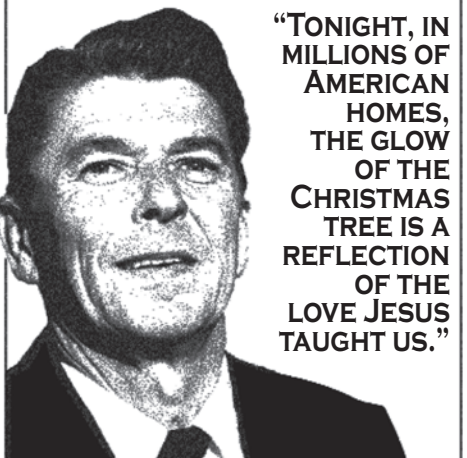
"They" also kept beating me over the head with that internet thing. "Nobody reads newspapers or books or magazines any more." Well, I do.

I live and die by my computer. It's how I put this paper together every month. I love that I have the world's most exhaustive research library at my fingertips. I can look up in seconds what used to require exhaustive trips to the library to find. Obviously the internet has its place. But going *completely* digital? I don't think so. I'm not a Luddite, I just don't believe it's the end-all, be-all to everything.

I love quoting Tommy Lee Jones in the fugitive. When the Ranchos Independent goes out once per month, at that moment we're in every "... warehouse, farmhouse, henhouse, outhouse and doghouse ..." in the Ranchos. All with a local angle.

Get buckled in for the next 19 years. We'll be here.

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**"TONIGHT, IN MILLIONS OF AMERICAN HOMES, THE GLOW OF THE CHRISTMAS TREE IS A REFLECTION OF THE LOVE JESUS TAUGHT US."**

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

# The True Light of the World

If anyone is responsible for my love of Christmas, it's my sweet mother. Our house was always decorated top to bottom for Christmas. From soaps to hand towels to refrigerator magnets. Every tabletop, every spare bit of space was covered with red, green, gold and silver. Some of those decorations went back several generations. The tree was full of memories from my childhood, hers and beyond. The bottom of which was so packed with presents I look back and think my mom must have played quite a bit of Tetris when I wasn't paying attention. My style is definitely toned-down in comparison to hers, but I know that my love of the Christmas aesthetic is all thanks to her.

What I find interesting is that this year I keep seeing posts and videos about how true Christians don't put up trees or stockings or other secular decorations because

it's a sin. Just one more reason that I should once again shut down all my social media; it never has anything of value to share. I know there are many Christians out there who do not

*So, in memory of my sweet mother, and in honor of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, I sit here surrounded by light, color, sweet memories and – most of all – love.*

like the commercial aspects of this time of year. I don't disagree that it is easy to get caught up giving too much importance to the wrong things. However, I don't think that being a Christian means you can't have a tree, or lights, or stockings, or presents, etc. It means Jesus comes first. It means seek Jesus in everything and you will find Him in everything.

For example, I love my tree. It's tall and full and flocked. I have decorated it with beautiful red and white baubles, ornaments and a garland. I have a Santa Claus tree topper wearing a fantastic, flowing, white-trimmed, red velvet cloak. At the bottom, the tree is wrapped in a matching red-velvet, white trimmed skirt reminiscent of what Rosemary Clooney and Vera-Allen wore in the final scene of the classic Christmas Movie, White

**GEN  
ERA  
TION  
WHY**  
by **eryn b. nyre**



Christmas. There isn't any Christian imagery on my tree, but when I take in its beauty and its radiant light, I'm reminded that Christ is the light of the world. His light shines absolutely everywhere. It shines in happy times, it shines through sorrow and despair, it shines in our very hearts when we accept Him and choose to follow Him, and yes ... it shines in my tree.

I have a Christmas village that grows a bit each year. It has little buildings all topped with snow and beaming with light. I have everything from bookstores to coffee shops, toy stores to a frozen lake where miniature people spin round and round on tiny little ice skates. I even

have a butcher, a baker and a candlestick maker, because I love a good easter egg. My dad built me this enormous, five-level wooden stand to display this wondrous little village, which is probably more of a town now. I hear they are filing articles of incorporation. There's a cathedral and a small chapel but even if I didn't have those buildings among my collection, that doesn't mean the spirit of God isn't there. Do I feel love for my fellow man when I look at my village? I really do. When I look at the joy, happiness, and togetherness that radiates from every little ceramic face, I'm reminded of the two most important things Jesus taught us: love God and love each other. My village makes me happy and it also inspires me to spend

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

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GEN WHY cont. from P. 6

time with the people I love and show kindness to everyone I meet.

When I see the presents under the tree I don't immediately think of commercialism or consumerism. I remember that I bought something for a loved one that I thought they might enjoy. I know they bought something for me that they hoped would bring me happiness. Sure, that can get out of hand when people buy excessively, but I personally believe that the simple act of giving someone a gift as an expression of affection is a beautiful and Christlike thing to do.

My mom had a tendency to go overboard on Christmas. I think she was just so full of love for her fam-

ily that it overflowed into a desire to make each Christmas the best Christmas ever. But even in her zeal to make every dream come true and fulfill every wish, I know it came from a heart so full of love that it spilled out of her not just in affection and kindness, but in the form of more presents than anyone actually needs. I can look back and see God's hand in how she celebrated Christmas because it was all about love.

So, in memory of my sweet mother, and in honor of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, I sit here surrounded by light, color, sweet memories and - most of all - love.

I wish you all a Merry Christmas, a Happy and Healthy New Year and may the Good Lord bless us, everyone!

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**ORGANIZED BY CHOICE**

By Brenda McElroy

**A Concord Christmas**

"Peace on earth." How's that going for you this holiday season? According to Webster, peace is a "a state of concord or tranquility." Concord isn't a word we use every day. One definition is "a simultaneous occurrence of two or more musical tones that produces an impression of agreeableness."

It doesn't take a musician to identify when multiple notes don't belong together. Instead of harmony there is discord, and it can set you on edge. It does, however, take a musician

... we can have peace with God the Father and with one another. May you know that lasting peace that only comes through Him.

to figure out which notes belong together. Some people have that natural talent. Others learn to identify it to create musical harmony.

There are many ways to enhance a state of concord during the holiday season. If you're not one for whom being organized comes naturally, it doesn't mean you're doomed to a stressful season. Here are five tips and tools to blend for a peaceful Christmas.

**Simplify** -- You can't do it all. Don't try. One way we simplified is with a tradition of going to PF Chang's for our family Christmas dinner. We enjoy the experience and I love spending less time creating a menu, grocery shopping, preparing food, setting tables and cleaning up.

Other families simplify by opting for a family trip or com-

binning gift money to donate to a charity in lieu of exchanging gifts. In addition to blessing someone less fortunate, this cuts down on shopping and wrapping and prevents after Christmas clutter and chaos due to more stuff to store.

For people who love to hunt for the perfect gift, drawing names is another option to simplify gift giving.

**Don't Recreate the Wheel** -- Take a photo of each room/area you decorate. Give it a caption on your phone so you can easily look it up next year. When you take down your décor at the end of the season, store things in bins according to their location so it's easy to recreate from the photo.

Unless your creative nature doesn't allow it, repeat successful holiday meal menus and consumable gift ideas. It's like playing the same carols you've

already learned on the piano instead of struggling with a new one each year. Concord.

**Set Limits** -- Putting limits on the number and variety of activities brings concord to your

Christmas. This is different for everyone. Just because your neighbor is off to a cookie exchange Saturday morning, a carriage ride in the afternoon, and neighborhood caroling in the evening doesn't mean that's right for you. Respectfully decline gift exchanges or activities that put you over the edge.

Limit the dollar amount for your gift-giving list. If done correctly, this enables you to know when you're done shopping and keeps you out of debt. Another concord moment.

**Make a Plan** -- For me, the biggest stressor is feeling like I'm running behind. Christmas always seems to come so fast. The best way to combat that stress is to plan ahead. When you get your 2023 calendar, assign dates for the preparation (deco-

Please see ORGANIZE on P. 9

## A Time for Christmas Treats

(December 2012)

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



by Jean Briner

fin cups with shortening, or spray with cooking spray.

Place cereal in resealable storage plastic bag. Seal bag and coarsely crush with rolling pin. In large bowl, mix cereal, flour, brown sugar and baking powder. Stir in remaining ingredients just until moistened – do not beat until smooth. Divide batter evenly among the muffin cups. Bake 18-20 minutes or until golden brown.

Makes 12 muffins.

**Chocolate Chip Zucchini Cake**

1 ¼ C sugar  
1/3 C butter or margarine – softened  
1/3 C vegetable oil

1 tsp. vanilla  
2 eggs

2 ½ C flour  
¼ unsweetened baking cocoa

1 tsp. baking soda  
½ C buttermilk  
2 C shredded zucchini

1/3 to ½ C semisweet chocolate chips  
½ C chopped nuts (optional)

Heat oven to 350. Grease 13 x 9 pan with shortening or cooking spray, lightly flour.

In large bowl, beat sugar, butter, oil, vanilla and eggs with spoon until well blended. Stir in flour, cocoa, baking soda and buttermilk until well combined. Fold in zucchini, chocolate chips and the nuts. Spread batter evenly in pan.

Bake 35 to 45 minutes or until toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Cool completely, about 1 hour. Cut into 20 pieces. If you don't have any buttermilk for this recipe, use 1 ½ tsp., vinegar or lemon juice to milk to make ½ cup.

Here we are just a week away from Christmas. Are your cards addressed and ready to be mailed, gifts bought and wrapped and you've started baking?

Do you have people around you that you would like to give a little "thank you" gift, but don't know what to do for that person? The boy down the street that comes and helps you with your lawn, the shut-in from your church,

the senior couple that live next door and look after your home when you are away, or even the paper boy (or girl in my case)? How about giving them a tray of home-baked goodies: a few cookies in a pretty little Christmas gift bag, a loaf of date, zucchini, or pumpkin bread, or even a half dozen

muffins. Having come from you and knowing they are homemade might mean more than anything you could buy.

**Banana Raisin Muffins**

2 C Cheerios cereal  
1 ¼ C all-purpose flour  
1/3 C packed brown sugar  
2 ½ tsp. baking powder  
1 C mashed ripe bananas (2 or 3 medium)  
1 C raisins  
2/3 C milk  
3 T vegetable oil  
1 egg- beaten

Heat oven to 400. Grease just the bottom of 12 regular size muf-

*Even though it seems time goes faster as we get older, I am looking forward to 2013. January I will start my fifth year writing this article, yes January 2009 was my first article. Sure doesn't seem that long ago. I've met a lot of nice people coming into the office, calling, or even writing. I want to thank each of you for your loyalty in reading my column each month.*

**Chewy Peanut Bars**

4 C Wheaties cereal  
1/3 C lightly salted dry-roasted peanuts, coarsely chopped  
½ C light corn syrup  
1/3 C packed brown sugar  
¼ C peanut butter  
3 T semisweet chocolate chips

Spray 9 inch square pan with cooking spray. In large bowl, mix cereal and peanuts. In a 2 quart saucepan, heat corn syrup, brown sugar and peanut butter to boiling over medium heat, stirring constantly. Boil and stir 1 minute. Pour over cereal mixture, stirring to coat entire mixture. Press in pan, using your fingers. If mix is too sticky, dampen your fingers with water.

In a small microwavable bowl, microwave chocolate chips

uncovered on high 30 seconds, stir. Continue microwaving 10 seconds at a time, stirring after each time, until smooth. Drizzle over bars. Refrigerate about 30 minutes or until chocolate has hardened. Makes 16 bars.

**Fruit and Nut Snack Bars**

**Snack Mix**  
4 C Honey Nut Cheerios cereal  
1 C dried tropical three-fruit mix \*\*\*  
½ C sunflower nuts\*\*\*  
½ C dry roasted peanuts

**Syrup**  
¾ C packed brown sugar  
½ C corn syrup  
¼ C peanut butter  
1 tsp. vanilla  
Spray 13x9 inch pan with cooking spray. In large bowl, mix

Please see RECIPES on P. 9

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RECIPES cont. from P. 8

snack mix ingredients, set aside.

In 2 quart saucepan, mix all syrup ingredients except vanilla. Heat to boiling over medium-high heat, stirring constantly. Boil 1 minute. Remove from heat, stir in vanilla. Pour syrup over snack mix, stirring until evenly coated. Press mixture firmly in pan. Cool completely at least 30 minutes. Cut into 9 rows by 4 rows, making 36 bars. Store lightly covered.

\*\*\* If you can't find the dried tropical fruit, use whatever dried fruit you like - apricots, dates, pineapple, but be sure to chop them to bite size. Same for the sunflower nuts - if you don't like them, use chopped toasted almonds, pistachios, or even cashews.

Here we are at the end of another

year. Even though it seems time goes faster as we get older, I am looking forward to 2013. January I will start my fifth year writing this article, yes January 2009 was my first article. Sure doesn't seem that long ago. I've met a lot of nice people coming into the office, calling, or even writing. I want to thank each of you for your loyalty in reading my column each month. I sometimes don't even know what I'm going to write about until I sit down in front of my computer. If you have something you would like me to write about, please call me. If I'm not in the office, we have an answering machine or you can send me an e-mail, or write your info on paper and put it in the mail slot in the door. I would love to hear from you!

Hope you all have a blessed Christmas and the happiest, and best of New Years.

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*The Bookshelf*

**More Community Programming**

By Jerrica Edmundson

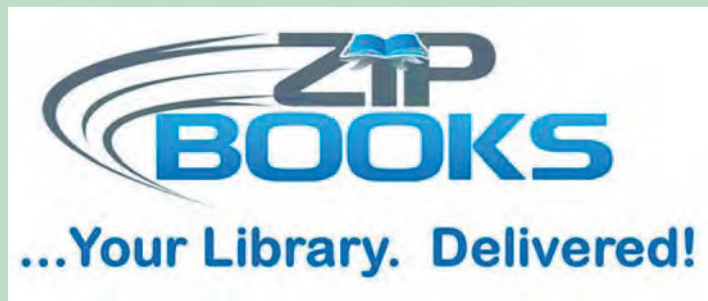
We are quickly approaching the end of the year and what a year it has been. I have been so proud to be a part of this community and share the ups and downs with those that come in. I love seeing everyone's smiling faces when they come in to get books or partake in our Friends of the Ranchos Library activities and am so excited to see what next year brings.

This year's highlights have definitely been our weekly story time with Mrs. Maxfield, where we always have a fun story, craft, and treat for the kids that come in. I know she has loved seeing the new faces that have been coming in to join her for that. We also had a fantastic Summer Reading Program with a re-vamped prize system that seemed to be a huge hit with the kids that took part. Being able to provide mobile hotspots to patrons so that they can have internet access when it isn't particularly convenient has been great, as well as netbook checkouts to help people get things done in the comfort of their own homes is fantastic. The icing on the cake though, was having Santa visit the library and spend time listening to what the little ones wanted for Christmas and giving them a little surprise of their own to take home afterward. He will absolutely be making a regular stop here in future years.

Next year, we hope to implement even more community programming, with a Warhammer program in the works where teens can come in, paint their own miniature figure, and learn how to play the game

in a fun and welcoming environment.

We are also working on developing a "Library of Things" here at the branch and have a survey currently running for community input on what you think should be included. Be sure to come in and fill out the survey so your voice can be heard. Our bookmobile is now making regular stops at



rural areas that don't have ready access to a physical branch, so our resources are even

more widespread than ever before. It is so fantastic to see the impact that is having on our local communities.

Zip Books is making a triumphant return at the start of the year so you will once again be able to have access to books that we may not have had readily available at the branch. Zip Books will allow shipping directly to your house through an Amazon delivery. Stop on by if you have any questions or want any more information on up-and-coming programs we have here at the library, we are always happy to help.

**HOURS**

<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>11 am - 6 pm</b>
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>11 am - 5 pm</b>
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>11 am - 5 pm</b>
<b>Friday</b>	<b>11 am - 3 pm</b>
<b>Saturday</b>	<b>11 am - 3 pm</b>
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>CLOSED</b>
<b>Monday</b>	<b>CLOSED</b>

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ORGANIZE cont. from P. 7

rating, shopping, baking) and activities that are a priority for you. Life may get in the way, but at least you'll have a list on your calendar of things that you know bring concord to your Christmas.

**Lasting Peace** -- I'm sitting in a coffee shop and to my left are two women with heads bowed and hands joined. In this busy holiday season, they are choosing con-

cord. Jesus came into this world to live, die and resurrect to life so that we can have peace with God the Father and with one another. May you know that lasting peace that only comes through Him.

Contact Organized by Choice at P.O. Box 26152, Fresno, CA 93729, call 559-871-3314 or email [info@organizedbychoice.com](mailto:info@organizedbychoice.com). You can visit [www.organizedbychoice.com](http://www.organizedbychoice.com) when you go online.

*Senior Report*

# An Early Christmas this Year

By *Melanie Williams*

The last four months the Senior Report has focused on the history of every working part that makes the Ranchos/Hills Senior Center so special. What makes everything come together is people.

The Senior Center provides opportunities for people, mostly in their twilight years, to come to a place and participate in activities with other seniors living in the community. This task is done with love, giving to others without thought of gain or prestige.

Christmas is a time of joyous giving. Our volunteers are part of this joyous giving all year. It

might be sitting at the reception desk answering phones or greeting people as they come in or sorting through donations made to the Boutique and Treasure House. We continue to flourish because of people, giving of their time and talents to make things happen at the Senior Center.

Bob Campbell is one of those giving volunteers. He took on the immense project of building a shed to house our tables and chairs when they are not in use. During his search for a suitable shed, he discovered that a prefabricated structure would not do the job. Bob took on the task of building the shed from the ground up. He got a team together, also willing volunteers, to help him with the structure. Senior Center members Bill Prince, Mike Fursman and Jan Williams stepped up to the task. They hired a local cement con-

tractor, Guillermo, to pour the foundation and sidewalk. A friend of Bob's, Ron Lipinski, had a construction grade nail gun and they enlisted his help to frame the shed and attach the siding. Our guys cut, stacked and nailed the wood frame together.

Another local neighbor, Sammy Valenzuela, attached the composite tiles to the roof. Bob and his son, Chris Campbell, painted the shed and made use of some of the leftover wood for shelving.

Our special thanks to Bob Campbell, Bill Prince, Mike Fursman, Jan Williams, Ron Lipinski and Chris Campbell for the many volunteer hours to help with this project. Not many of us at the center can take on a volunteer project of that magnitude, however, we can volunteer something within our ability.

Terry Killingsworth is a new member who was willing to help with the writing of monthly birthday and anniversary cards. It is an ongoing task to share sincere wishes of celebration to our members each month and it brings joy to Terry and others as well.

Carol Sierra-McLachlin signed up to help cover the front reception desk because other volunteers were needed to set up for Brown Bag Day on every third Wednesday of each month. Ruth Baker and other class members will lead the exercise activity if needed on days when our exercise instructor is gone. Roy Cochran is in charge of returning recyclables whenever

Please see **SENIORS** on P. 11



*Spring Shed Construction in the capable hands of (from left) Ron Lipinski, Jan Williams, Mike Fursman and Bob Campbell.*



*Official shed inspectors Carrie Bennett (left) and Jolien Mason check out the new shed construction at the Senior Center.*

## Merry Christmas

from

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SENIORS cont. from P. 10

needed for the center. There are many examples of wonderful volunteers in our community, proving that people are the most important part of the Ranchos/Hills Senior Center. As the Christmas holidays and the New Year approaches, we give sincere thanks to all those with giving hearts and who give joyously every year.

With the coming of the New Year, it is now time to sign up for the Madera County Food Bank Senior Brown Bag Program. The Madera Food Bank brings the Brown Bags to the Senior Center every third Wednesday of each month. We help to distribute the food to the seniors that have registered. It costs just

\$24 for the year to participate, paid to the Madera Food Bank. Applications must be filled out and turned in with a check made out to the Madera County Food Bank. Call the Ranchos/Hills Senior Center for more information at 559-645-4864.

In January, we will be having our New/Renewal Membership Drive. The cost is \$65 for membership from January through December of 2023.

We are looking forward to a Merry Christmas and a wonderful New Year.

Thought for December: "May you have the gladness of Christmas, which is hope, the spirit of Christmas which is peace, and the heart of Christmas which is love." Quote by Ada V. Hendricks



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**Chamber Crabfeed is Coming**

The Annual Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce Crabfeed is coming Friday, March 3 at the Dante Club in Fresno. Keep your eyes open for more information in coming weeks.






**When's the NEXT Chamber of Commerce Meeting?**

The Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce would love to see you at our next meeting, Wednesday, January 11 at 6:30 p.m., 37167 Ave. 12 Suite 5C in the Maywood Center. Come join us and see what's going on in your community. Call us at 645-4001.

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# SEMUCU speaks

By Igal Treibatch

*It is possible to turn one's pain into a neighbor's comfort*

I've been farming just west of the Ranchos since the mid-80s. As time passed, drought events continued and plagued Madera. New rules and regulations are forcing the farming community to reduce their farming footprint, and in some cases lose their family's farm and livelihood. New water restrictions have forced us to remove 140 acres of grapes and 70 acres of almonds. These unfortunate events and times are plaguing all of us in unexpected ways. Slowly, we're being driven out of our family business.

However, it is Christmas time and the need for good fellowship is upon us,

so SEMCU – with help from we farmers – stepped in, cut some of the trees we had to uproot and prepared them for splitting into firewood. We delivered them to Royal Goodman and Ken Molding of American Veteran Assistance, Inc. so they could help with the splitting while Verlaine Elinburg kindly allowed the firewood to be dispensed from her home at 37101 Ave. 12 in the ranchos.

If you live in the Ranchos area, you're invited to stop by Verlaine Elinburg's place and claim your allotment of free firewood. This giveaway will take place during the month of December

Please see SEMCU on P. 15



# 4H Happenings Sierra Shadows 4H Club

By Sarah Morgan

The Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce Community Christmas Tree Lighting was held on Friday, Dec. 2. The tree lighting was a special event where families could come and have a great time, and it was a special event to honor our



veterans too. There was a tree that had many stars on it and each star had a list of

things that would be very nice to get for the veterans at the V.A. Hospital in Fresno. Everyone got a chance to get one of those stars off the tree and hope the items were a great help to the people who served our country.

Sierra Shadows 4-H was there to provide many fun games for children to play, some arts and crafts, yummy snacks, and a nice parents' night off. Everything was good and fun, including an amazing visit from Santa that night but the big reason why we were there was to honor the people

who served our country, and thank them for everything that they have done for us. The tree lighting was an amazing night, everyone had so much fun

there, and we thank you veterans for everything that you have all done.

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SEMCU cont. from P. 14

with the hopes of keeping our community warm, in good spirits and full of holiday cheer.

**HAPPY HOLIDAYS TO ALL!**

SEMCU is a Nonprofit Corporation dedicated to help our community thrive. We hold meetings once a month on the third Monday of every month at 6 p.m. for one hour discussing our community's needs and evolution on matters such as school, safety, roads, water, events and whatever is needed to improve our lives as a community. Everyone is invited to

participate, offer opinions and suggest projects that will help serve our community's needs.

As part of social distancing, our monthly board meetings will be held via teleconferencing. To join in at 6 p.m., dial 312-757-3221. When prompted dial the access code 715657949#.

To reach SEMCU for more information or suggestions, call 559-363-9095 or reach the organization at [www.semcu.org](http://www.semcu.org) or by email at [info@semcu.org](mailto:info@semcu.org).

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## Biden's Extreme Recklessness

*By Rich Lowry*

Joe Biden 2024 is a bad idea whose time has come.

If Democrats had gotten the shellacking that seemed to be coming their way in the midterms, Biden might have been wounded enough for elements of the Democratic establishment to begin to try to shoulder him into retirement.

Instead, the Democratic overperformance has Biden looking revitalized. Gov. Gavin Newsom of California told the president on election night that he's not running against him (not that Biden was ever likely to face a direct primary challenge). Press coverage has emphasized Biden's vindication. The shot in the arm is understandable given what his party was able to pull off, yet it doesn't make Biden a day younger -- in fact, he just turned 80 and every day of his presidency is an experiment in whether an unprecedentedly aged president can perform at the level demanded of the office.

Democrats consider Biden the safe choice in 2024, since he's the incumbent and surrounded by flawed alternatives, yet he is actually an enormous risk. Nominating him again would be extremely reckless, both for the party and for the country.

It may well be that Biden, even in his enfeebled state, is the best matchup against Donald Trump. He beat him once before, after all, and used him as an effective foil during the midterms. It is to Biden's advantage that it has proven difficult for anyone to work up a passionate hatred of him, rather than a low-intensity sense of pity or contempt. And he still has a relatively moderate affect and profile -- there are limits to how "woke" an 80-something, silver-haired creature of the Democratic establishment can appear, no matter how far left his policies are.

There's no guarantee, though, that Biden will get the former president as his opponent. If he doesn't, then he'll be denied the dynamic of one old guy whose record is terrible running against another old guy who frightens people.

If Trump can't secure the GOP nomination, everything changes. Ron DeSantis is 44. Ted Cruz is 51. Mike Pompeo is 58. Tim Scott is 47. Basically, any Republican nominee besides Trump would instantly be bequeathed a powerful past-vs.-future theme (age aside, Trump will unavoidably and perhaps explicitly be running a campaign of restoration).

There's another risk for Democrats, as well -- namely that Biden will experience some age-related meltdown in public during a general-election campaign that will make his struggles undeniable even to well-wishers determined to look the other way.

Aging is a progressive condition. Biden isn't getting any younger or more capable. The good news is that today, right now, he is as fit as he'll ever be to perform his duties; the bad news is that there are a lot of days between now and 2024 when he'll be less fit, whether by a tiny increment or by a lot.

The public is already unsettled. According to the exit polls, 58% of voters said Biden does not have the acuity to serve effectively as president.

If Democrats get their way, this is just the beginning. They propose to reelect a man who will be 82 on Inauguration Day, and 86 by the end of his second term.

The actuarial tables and the realities of aging being what they are, this creates considerable risk of putting the country through the trauma of having a president who is incapable of carrying out his entire

Please see **LOWRY** on P. 17

**CRIME** cont. from P. 2

for fleeing armed robbers.

At around 3:30 p.m., the Madera County Sheriff's Office got a request from the Fresno County Sheriff's Department requesting help corralling a group of three armed robbers who had robbed a marijuana dispensary up in Friant. The suspects had stolen a vehicle and were seen driving toward Madera County.

A Madera County Deputy found the stolen vehicle on Highway 145 near Island Drive and a suspect in the car "leg bailed" and was caught. At this time, deputies also found an abandoned car at Road 37 and Av-

enue 16 that they believed was part of the incident. It was at this time that the helicopter arrived on the scene and told residents over its loudspeaker to stay inside and lock their homes as it searched for the armed gunmen. The area was thoroughly searched, resulting ultimately in the capture of the two remaining suspects, who were arrested by the Fresno Deputies.

Sheriff Pogue said that the investigation into this case was still developing and there may be some ongoing law enforcement activity in the area. He advised Ranchos residents to remain alert and report any suspicious activity to the Sheriff's Office at 559-675-7770.

*Kiwanis Korner*

# Kiwanis Activities Kick into High Gear to Finish Off 2022, Greet 2023

By Sally Rowden

As I begin this column, it's pouring rain outside. It has felt good to be able to turn the drip off for a few days. Nice, too, that snow is piling up in the Sierra.

Turning to the Kiwanis happenings, our guest speaker at the end of November was Rod Chaney from the Boy Scouts of America - Sequoia Council. He gave us an update on scouting in the Madera Ranchos. Main priority is building up the programs. If interested in learning more and/or becoming involved, you can call the local office at 559-320-2100.

Our "Manhattan Restaurant Raffle" concluded on Dec. 1. The winner of the top prize, a gift certificate of \$400 to the Manhattan Restaurant in Fresno, is

Becky Koop. The second and third prizes of \$50 each went to Richard Wayne and Shelly Johnson. Congratulations to these three and thanks to all for their support in this raffle fundraiser. The raffle monies go to our children in our communities.

We assisted at the Christmas Tree Lighting sponsored by the Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce on Friday, Dec. 2. The cookies, hot chocolate and coffee were available in abundance. Madera Honor Guard led the Flag Salute and Tree Lighting. There were kids, games and crafts provided by the Sierra Shadows 4-H. This was their Community Service project. Job well done. Santa arrived escorted by Station 19 greeting all and welcoming picture taking. Cub Scout Troop 119 was there in support. Supervisor Jordan Wamhoff and family were enjoying

the evening. And Heavenly Carrillo, Miss Clovis Outstanding Teen, was also present. Thanks to the Chamber for an active, fun evening.

Our Christmas House Decorating Contest concluded. A huge thank you to our three community judges: Honorary Mayor Alec Konkle, Evan Walsh and Andy Wheeler. The First Place Winner was Jeff and Kelly Dizney; the Second Place Winner was Joel and Bailey Nelson; and the Third Place Winner was Mark and Devon Corrente. Congratulations! And a huge thanks to each of the contestants for their hard work, for getting involved and for giving us creative, twinkling Christmas lights to enjoy.

This brings us moving into a new year with our first fundraiser event for 2023. Our Valentine's Day Limo Ride.

The ride houses 12 to 14 people. The cost per ticket will be \$45. Drawing to be held the beginning of February. All Kiwanis members will be selling tickets. Email Sally Rowden at rowdensally2@gmail.com for information on a Kiwanis member near you. For further information and/or questions, contact President Ollia Ridge at 559-824-0979.

This brings us to a close, not only of this article but of 2022. We sincerely want to thank the folks of our communities in supporting the Kiwanis Club of Madera Ranchos throughout this year. You made our 2022 year successful, and in turn, successful for our children and our communities. I leave you with this for the New Year: "If Plan 'A' doesn't work, the alphabet has 25 more letters." (Claire Cook)

[www.RanchosKiwanis.com](http://www.RanchosKiwanis.com)



**1st Place Winner**  
Jeff and Kelly Dizney



**2nd Place Winner**  
Joel and Bailey Nelson



**3rd Place Winner**  
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## “Dear Santa” Then and Now

By Betty Van Valkenburg

**Then:** “Dear Santa, please bring toys and stuff.”

This well-seasoned writer has seen many Christmases come and go, starting in a rural area where the roads were dirt, the “restroom” was an outhouse 20 yards from the back door, the “bathroom” was a galvanized washtub sitting on the back porch, and electricity and running water weren’t available. Water came from a well accessed by a bucket on a rope. Santa’s gifts came by mail, chosen from among the least expensive items in Sears & Roebuck’s or Montgomery Ward’s catalogs; or they were handmade by Dad with his few tools or sewn by Mom on the old treadle (foot powered) sewing machine – or they came not at all.

“Twitter” meant a high-pitched sound. “Tweet” meant a bird’s chirp. “Tik-Tok” was the sound of the wind-up clock on the mantel. “Media” was the area newspaper, and later the radio when electricity was made available. “Social media” might have meant a written invitation to a social gathering, sent by snail mail or hand delivered. Phones, when they became available, were frustrating 10-party lines, and the word “cellular” referred only to human body cells. The terms “climate change,” “climate crisis” and “global warming” had not yet been invented to frighten and direct the populace to “acceptable” behavior. Little did we know that the world was going to end by the year 2012!

Then, as now, parents’ fervent prayers included pleas for their children’s health and safety – safety from the likes

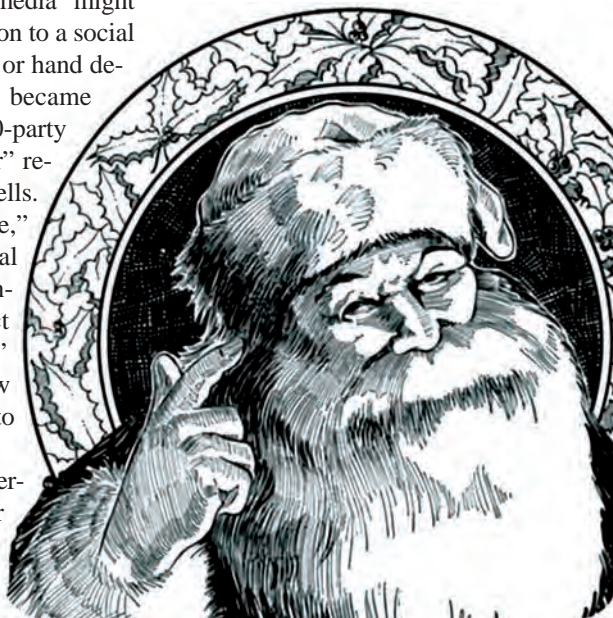
of natural disasters, accidents, illnesses and, yes, “bad guys.” But then they had no reason to envision today’s reality: acceptance of wanton violence and destruction, proliferation of deadly narcotics, chaos in society and schools, rampant crime without punishment, or the breakdown of the family structure.

Back then, as now, loving parents worked and scrimped so that “Santa” could bring the best possible gifts to their children.

**Now:** “Dear Santa, forget the toys and stuff. Bring a sleigh full of sanity and safety for our troubled nation, a copy of the Constitution for every elected politician, good basic educational principles to our schools and fathers to fatherless families.”

Obviously our world has witnessed drastic changes – some good, and some disastrous but unfortunately accepted – like homeless street encampments strewn with drug paraphernalia and filth, legalized shoplifting, government-caused food, gas and consumer goods shortages, an influx from our southern border of deadly fentanyl, needy migrants, terrorists and assorted criminals, schools indoctrinating rather than educating and in some cities the purposeful elimination of police protection from increasingly dangerous streets.

Perhaps it’s time to give Santa a break and “deliver the goods” ourselves, as engaged and vocal citizens who demand that our elected officials follow conservative principles that will make our nation, state and cities safe, free and prosperous.



• On Dec. 23, 1672, Italian astronomer, mathematician and engineer Giovanni Domenico Cassini discovered Rhea (originally christened Sidera Lodoicea), the second-largest of Saturn’s 62 moons. In 2010, a spacecraft named for Cassini would detect a thin oxygen atmosphere around it -- the first such known outside planet Earth.

• On Dec. 24, 1945, a fire destroyed the home of George and Jennie Sodder and their nine children in Fayetteville, West Virginia. While their parents and four other siblings escaped, no sign of the remaining five children has ever been found, despite decades-long publicity and numerous investigations by both law enforcement and amateur sleuths.

• On Dec. 22, 1956, a baby western gorilla named Colo debuted on the world stage at the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium in Ohio, where she would spend her entire life, becoming the first-ever gorilla born in captivity. Upon her death in 2017, she was also the oldest known gorilla in the world.

• On Dec. 20, 1957, Elvis Presley received his Army draft notice while spending the holiday season at his newly purchased mansion, Graceland. Distraught fans sent thousands of letters to the Army asking for him to be spared, but Elvis himself had no hesitation about entering, though he did receive a deferment that allowed him to finish work on the movie “King Creole.”

• On Dec. 21, 2006, rebel monks at the centuries-old Esphigmenou Monastery in Thessaloniki, Greece, took up crowbars and fire extinguishers to repel church-appointed monks with sledgehammers attempting to break in. The rebels vehemently opposed efforts by the Orthodox church to improve relations with the Vatican.

• On Dec. 25, 2013, military defense forces discovered a professionally designed but incomplete 40-meter tunnel connecting Hong Kong to China that included rail tracks, hanging lamps, ventilators and a small transport cart. Authorities believed the tunnel, which cost an estimated \$494,000, was created with the intention of smuggling goods into Hong Kong to avoid tariffs.

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## Moments in time

### Were You Stationed at Fort Ord?

I remember Fort Ord as a beautiful place to live, with perfect weather and the ocean right over the sand dunes. It was idyllic. But now over a thousand veterans have developed cancer after having served at Fort Ord. The likely culprit: chemicals in the drinking water, 40 of them, with trichloroethylene, or TCE, being most notable for causing different types of cancer. And once again, leaking tanks allowed chemicals to leach into the water supply.

The EPA labeled Fort Ord as a Super Fund site in 1990 because of leaking underground petroleum tanks, a landfill, a motor pool, a target range, a burn pit for drums of chemicals and other culprits. The base closed in 1994, but the housing was still used until 1997. Veterans who have become ill after serving at Fort Ord have gone to the VA for care and have been told there’s no service connection between their illnesses and Fort Ord.

To read more about Fort Ord, see [www.fortordcleanup.com](http://www.fortordcleanup.com) and click on “Cleanup Programs.” To see what was known when, click on “Documents.” Or call them at 800-852-9699.

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by Freddy Groves

# SAY YOU SAW IT IN the Ranchos Independent

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LOWRY cont. from P. 15

evitably wrenching 25th Amendment crisis, or we have to deal with the legitimacy issues around an unelected president.

Why even consider going down this route? In part, because Biden made an identity politics choice for vice president, and not

a good one. It is understandable that the prospect of Vice President Kamala Harris makes Democrats want to cling to their nurse for fear of something worse. But the country deserves a better idea.

Rich Lowry is editor of the *National Review*.

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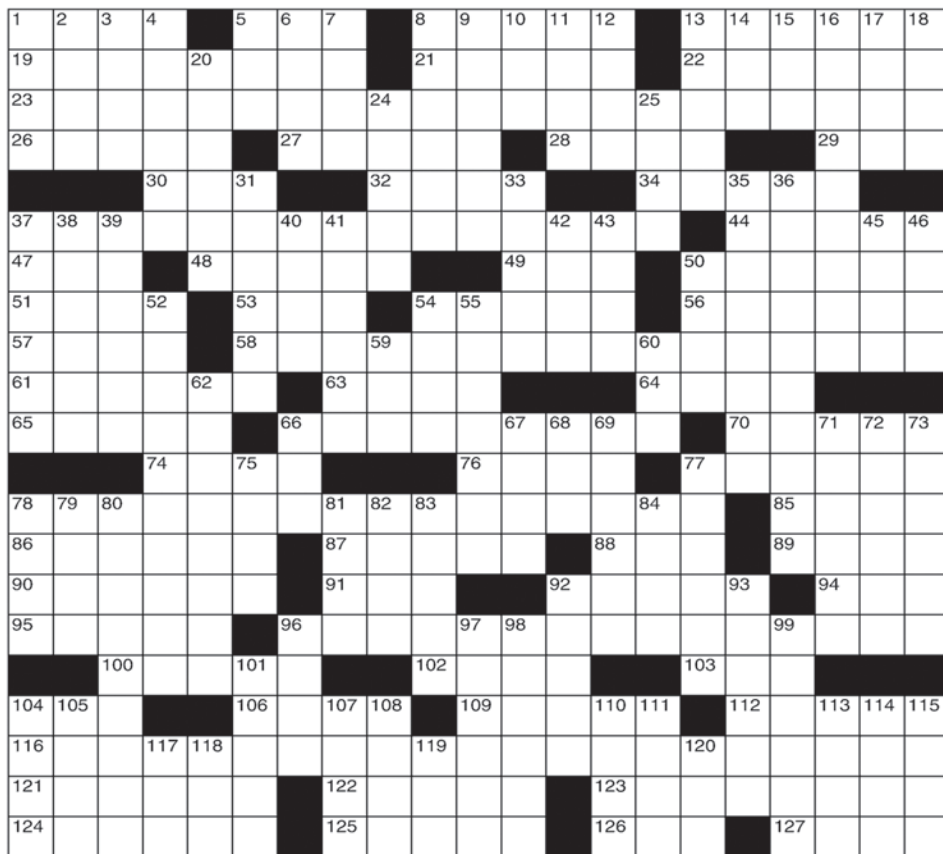
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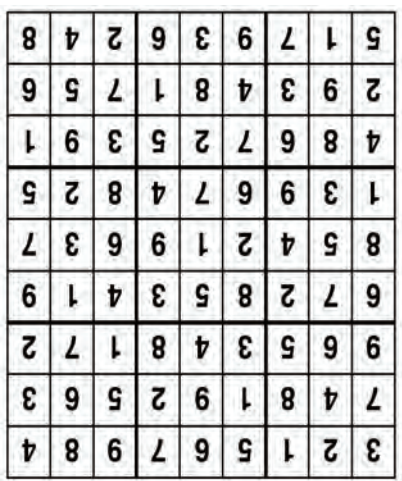
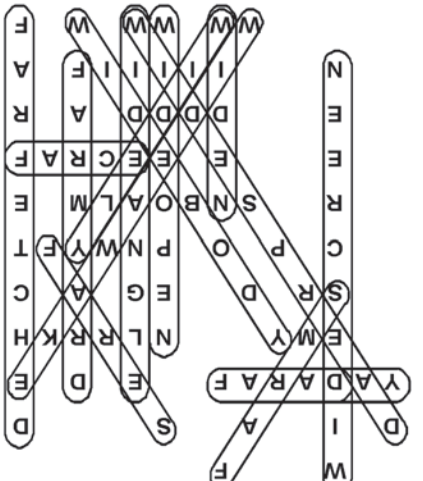
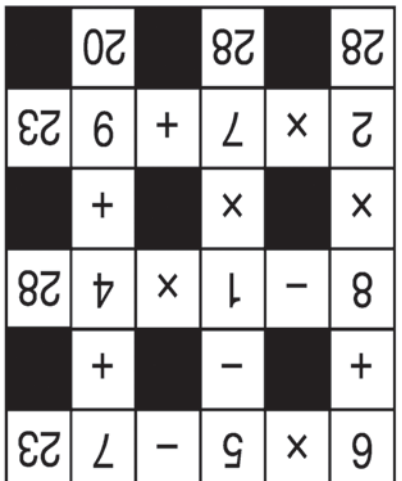
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# Super Crossword



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AZS 3785



- ACROSS**
- 1 James of "Alien Nation"
  - 5 Lead-in to hazard
  - 8 "My opinion is ..."
  - 13 Tried very hard
  - 19 Tumblers, e.g.
  - 21 Actress Hunt
  - 22 Fatal
  - 23 Start of a riddle
  - 26 Strong metal
  - 27 Vertical line on a graph
  - 28 Attack like an alligator
  - 29 Land north of Mex.
  - 30 — -country (music genre)
  - 32 Peruvian of yore
  - 34 Toronto Maple —
  - 37 Riddle, part 2
  - 44 Wild party
  - 47 Battle (for)
  - 48 See 60-Down
  - 49 Triumphed
  - 50 "Right now!"
  - 51 First class for painters
  - 53 City law: Abbr.
  - 54 Sea predator
  - 56 Actor Mickey
  - 57 Paint crudely
  - 58 Riddle, part 3
  - 61 Borgnine of Hollywood
  - 63 Gulf country
  - 64 Sandler of "Spanglish"
  - 65 Refine, as metal
  - 66 What a hot rod may race on
  - 70 Words on an apartment rental sign
  - 74 Strong metal
  - 76 City near Provo
  - 77 Purple Hearts, e.g.
  - 78 Riddle, part 4
  - 85 Composer Satie
  - 86 Apple app for importing video
  - 87 "I suffer so!"
  - 88 Pan coverer
  - 89 Gave for a while
  - 90 Sole servings
  - 91 Buddhism branch
  - 92 Just kills time
  - 94 Two, in Spain
  - 95 Occupied
  - 96 End of the riddle
  - 100 For the — (temporarily)
  - 102 Blow a horn
  - 103 Stephen of "Blackthorn"
  - 104 Flower holder
  - 106 Kailua Bay locale
  - 109 Creator of Tom Sawyer
  - 112 Gave a monetary penalty
  - 116 Riddle's answer
  - 121 Nogales nap
  - 122 How figure skaters skate
  - 123 Of financial matters
  - 124 Rich, eggy cakes
  - 125 Entertained lavishly
  - 126 Boxing ref's ruling
  - 127 Court dividers
  - 9 Utter failure
  - 10 Sever
  - 11 Competitor of Ben & Jerry's
  - 12 Yard feature
  - 13 Place to ski
  - 14 Vietnamese holiday
  - 15 Road sign no.
  - 16 "Banjo on my knee" song
  - 17 Winery tubs
  - 18 "Frozen" snow queen
  - 20 — Hollywood Screen Kiss" (1998 film)
  - 24 Be alive
  - 25 Fifty percent
  - 31 Talk show emcee, e.g.
  - 33 Egypt's Sadat
  - 35 Formally abolish
  - 36 Displayed example of a product
  - 37 Gives the slip to
  - 38 Aviation military branch
  - 39 Fix the pitch of again
  - 40 Architect Saarinen
  - 41 Sierra Nevada evergreen
  - 42 Blister, e.g.
  - 43 Like GIs peeling potatoes
  - 45 Flower holder
  - 46 Santa's bagful
  - 50 Egg on
  - 52 "Yes, if memory serves"
  - 54 Benefit bagful
  - 55 Chewbacca's companion
  - 59 — -la-la
  - 60 With 48-Across, record of arrests, slangily
  - 62 Put in financial distress
  - 66 Gene-splicing stuff
  - 67 Verifiable
  - 68 No longer practicing: Abbr.
  - 69 Marcos of the Philippines
  - 71 Texas city
  - 72 Poet Wylie or novelist Glyn
  - 73 Double cluck of reproach
  - 75 Some till bills
  - 77 Sweetie
  - 78 LP player of old
  - 79 Uganda's Idi
  - 80 Donator of services
  - 81 Old TV clown
  - 82 "Fer —!" ("Like, totally!")
  - 83 Take responsibility for something
  - 84 Easter flower
  - 92 Spot's jingler
  - 93 Tennis player Edberg
  - 96 Fava —
  - 97 Catch sight of
  - 98 Dressed for a ball
  - 99 Serve, as at a restaurant
  - 101 Concluding musical parts
  - 104 "You, over there ..."
  - 105 Dayton locale
  - 107 Horse foot
  - 108 — Reader (eclectic quarterly)
  - 110 "Oh, sure!"
  - 111 Part of a vase
  - 113 Alaska city
  - 114 Revise text
  - 115 "ER" folks
  - 117 Marshall Plan prez
  - 118 Swallowed
  - 119 Big success
  - 120 Overly

Say you saw it in the Ranchos Independent

# Classified

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Send your tips to *Now Here's a Tip*, 628 Virginia Drive, Orlando, FL 32803

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## GO FIGURE! by Linda Thistle

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+			-	+				
	-		x		28			
x		x		+				
	x		+		23			
28		28		20				
1	2	4	5	6	7	7	8	9

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Just Like Cats & Dogs

by Dave T. Phipps



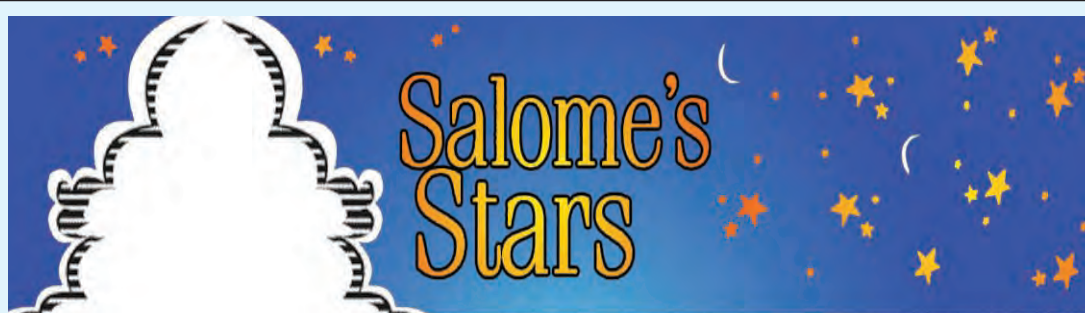
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"So when do you think you can finish putting up the Christmas decorations?"



**ARIES** (March 21 to April 19) You're eager to "Ram" headfirst into that new project. But before you do, find out why some of your colleagues might not appear to be as gung-ho about it as you are.

**TAURUS** (April 20 to May 20) All that dedicated hard work you've been putting in pays off better than you expected. So go ahead, reward yourself with something befitting a beauty-loving Bovine.

**GEMINI** (May 21 to June 20) It's a good time to take on that new challenge. And if your self-confidence is lacking, instead of telling yourself why you can't do it, list all the reasons why you can.

**CANCER** (June 21 to July 22) This is one time when you might want to put some distance between you and the job at hand. It will give you a better perspective on what you've done and what you still need to do.

**LEO** (July 23 to August 22) Resist that occasional lapse into Leonine laziness that sometimes overtakes the Big Cat. Don't cut corners. Do the job right at this time, or you might have to redo it later.

**VIRGO** (August 23 to September 22) You know how you like to do things. And that's fine. But watch that you don't impose your methods on others. A current financial crunch soon eases.

**LIBRA** (September 23 to October 22) Someone might try to take advantage of your generosity. But before your sensitivity toward others overwhelms your good sense, check their story out carefully.

**SCORPIO** (October 23 to November 21) Your strong Scorpionian sense of fairness lets you see all sides of a dispute. Continue to remain impartial as you help each person work through their particular grievance.

**SAGITTARIUS** (November 22 to December 21) Trust your keen Sagittarian insight to help you see through an offer that might not be all it claims to be. A closer look could reveal disturbing elements.

**CAPRICORN** (December 22 to January 19) With the Goat exhibiting a more dominant aspect these days, you could find it easier to make your case in front of even the most skeptical audience.

**AQUARIUS** (January 20 to February 18) Take things nice and easy as you continue to build up your energy reserves for a big upcoming change. You'll need your strength for what lies ahead.

**PISCES** (February 19 to March 20) Recent news from someone you trust could help you make an important decision. Also, be prepared to confront an upcoming change in a personal situation.

**Born this Week**

*You instinctively know when to be serious and when to be humorous -- attributes everyone finds endearing.*

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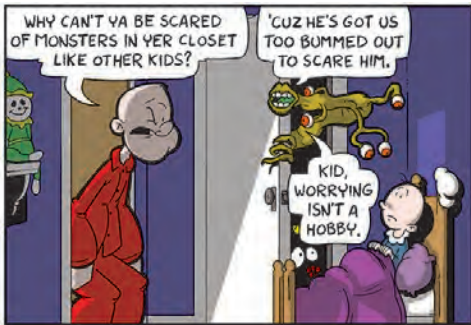
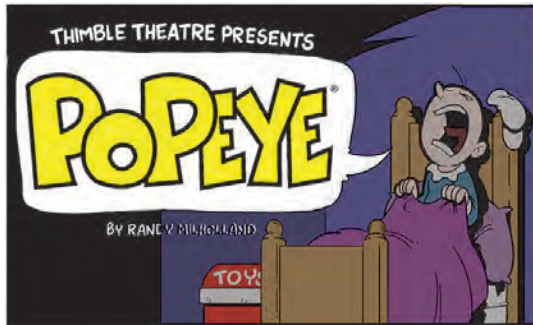
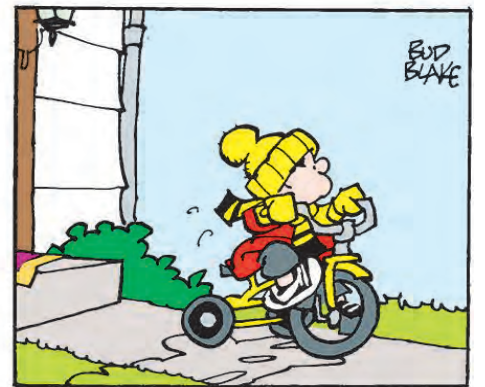
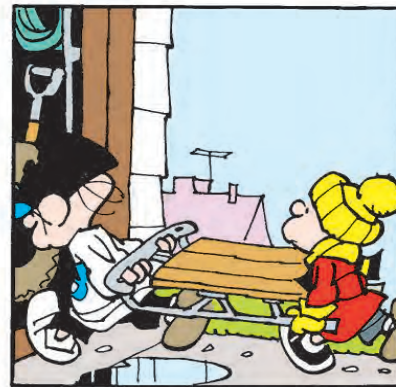
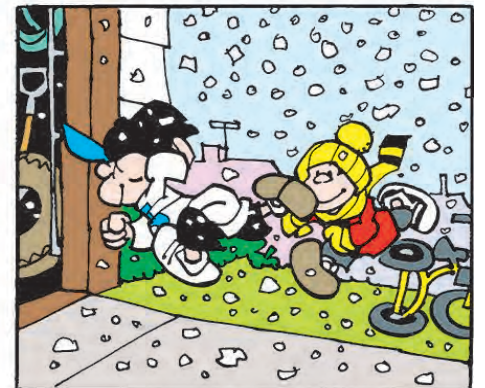
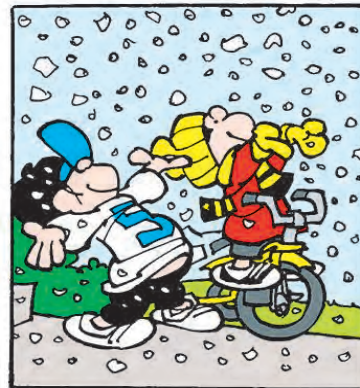
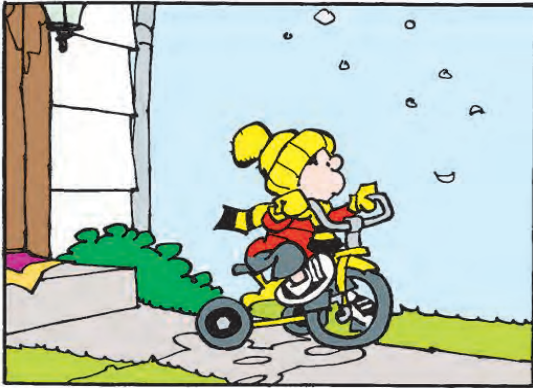
Kids' Maze



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## TIGER

by BUD BLAKE



## TRIVIA TEST

By Fifi Rodriguez

Answer

1. MOVIES: What does Susan Walker want from Santa in "Miracle on 34th Street"?
2. MUSIC: Which rock band once called itself The New Yardbirds?
3. GEOGRAPHY: Where is the Thar Desert?
4. TELEVISION: Which sitcom's theme song was "Thank You for Being a Friend"?
5. FOOD & DRINK: When was frozen food invented?
6. MOVIES: Which Disney princess is modeled after a real person?
7. ANATOMY: What human organ can naturally regenerate?
8. ANIMAL KINGDOM: What are male and female swans called?
9. U.S. STATES: Which state's motto is "Excelsior!"?
10. HISTORY: How many people signed the U.S. Declaration of Independence?

1. A house.
2. Led Zepplin.
3. India and Pakistan.
4. "The Golden Girls."
5. 1924. Clarence Birdseye invented the quick freezing process.
6. Pochontas.
7. The liver.
8. Cobs and pens.
9. New York ("Ever upward!").
10. 56.

Click on "Local News" at

# Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps



# R.F.D.

by Mike Marland



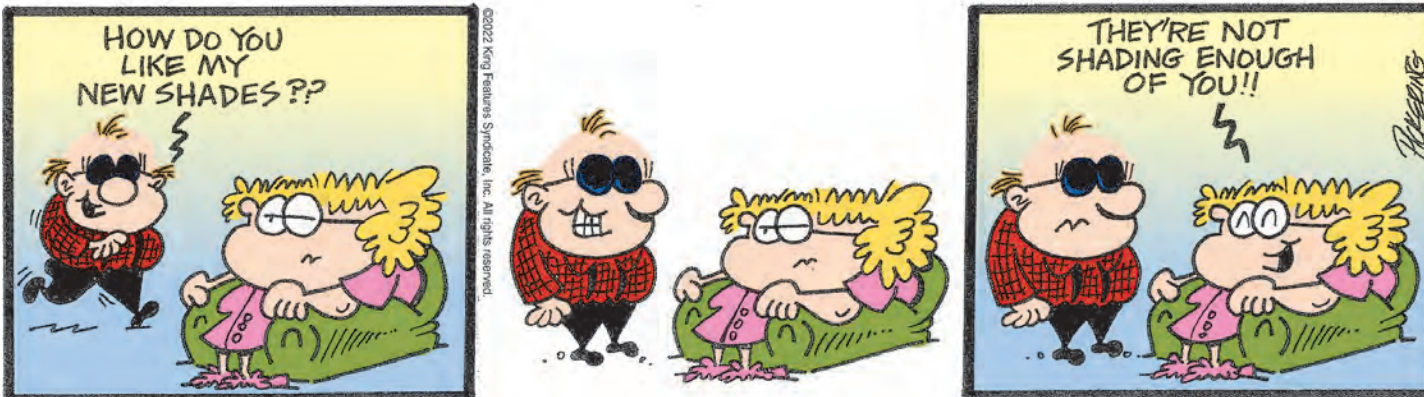
# Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas



# The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



# Wishing Well®

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

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

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# MAGIC MAZE ● FAR AND WIDE

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

Find the listed words in the diagram. They run in all directions forward, backward, up, down and diagonally. Unlisted clue hint: Largest City in North Dakota

- Farad
- Faraday
- Farce
- Fares
- Far-fetched
- Farms
- Farmyard
- Wide-angle
- Wide awake
- Wide-body
- Wide-open
- Widely
- Widen
- Widescreen
- Widespread

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# SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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

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# FUN PAGES

# **SEM CU**

**south east madera county united**

## **Free Firewood for the Holiday Season to Qualified Southeast Madera County Residents!**

**To qualify, you must show an ID with proof of residency within the local area. Pickup will be at 37101 Avenue 12 in the Madera Ranchos, next to the SEMCU sign. For more information contact us at the number below.**

*Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays! Thank you to all that have helped SEMCU and our Community this Year.*

**Our next meeting is  
Monday, January 16 at 6 p.m.**

**Until further notice, the regular SEMCU meetings will take place via teleconference. Please let us know if you have any questions.**

**The teleconference number is 312-757-3121 and  
the Access Code is 715-657-949.**

12/22

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:  
559-363-9095 • [www.semcu.org](http://www.semcu.org) • [info@semcu.org](mailto:info@semcu.org)**