

The Ranchos Independent



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THE WATER WARS BEGIN

a new county well is at odds with private well owners

... WILL YOU BE NEXT?
by karen petryna

In This Issue

*Editorial • Page 5 / Aunt Jean's Ranchos Recipes • Page 8
Classifieds • Page 22 / Fun Pages • Pages 26 & 27*



It was dark, cold and wet one evening last month when several residents of the Ranchos met with District 1 Supervisor Manuel Nevarez to discuss the community's water resources. At immediate issue was the new Dublin Drive Production Well, already installed and scheduled to be connected and brought online as part of the Madera Ranchos State Water System this fall. The meeting facilitator, Chuck LaRue, said he had asked Supervisor Nevarez to come and speak in the Ranchos about Special Maintenance District 10A (MD10A) which supplies water but is not actually a water district. As the meeting progressed, the full and critical nature of the situation came to light.

Ironically, the first rainfall in about two months was falling on the night of Jan. 30 when Nevarez, Planning Commissioner Tom Hurst and County Engineer Kheng Vang met with LaRue and other residents of MD10A at Pete & Maria's Italian Bistro on Avenue 12. Despite good efforts at congeniality, a damp mood pervaded the atmosphere -- not because of the rain but rather the general lack of it.

At the heart of the matter was the Dublin Drive Well. Installed on an empty lot on the south side of Dublin Drive between Roads 37½ and 37¾, the well had been drilled to service residents in MD10A with a reliable source of water, but the well is proving to illustrate the disconnect that can sometimes exist between government and citizens.

First and foremost, the well has been drilled on land outside the boundary of the assessment district (see map on p. 16), effectively taking water from an area where surrounding property owners are all on privately purchased and maintained wells. One

neighbor attending the meeting explained he had only recently installed a new well on his property that had cost \$18,000 because his old well had gone dry. He was very concerned how long his new well would last with the Dublin Well so close and projected to operate at 800 gallons per minute. Nearly all of those present operated private wells on their own properties, including Supervisor Nevarez and Commissioner Hurst, both of whom said they had experienced the effects of large production wells being installed near their homes.

Engineer Vang explained that a \$50,000 study had been done, including measuring the water depth in several wells within a 1,200 foot radius of the Dublin Well both before and after its pump test last October. The purpose of that test was to determine appropriate compensation to property owners whose wells would be impacted by the Dublin Well. Only those within the Assessment Boundary No. 1 would be eligible, however. For most there that night, this was the first time the term "appropriate compensation" had been heard and for many begged the question, "What is the 'appropriate compensation' for having no water?"

Limited Participation

The MD10A is different than Assessment District No. 1, and only those properties within the assessment boundary will be allowed to connect to the water system, should their private well go dry, County Engineer Vang said. He then added that the eventual goal was to get everyone on the water system and that another zone of benefit needs to be created to do that.

Assessment Boundary No. 1 was cre-

Please see **WATER** on P. 16

Ranchos Resident Challenges Supes Over Dublin Well at Board Meeting

Ranchos resident Chuck LaRue read the following statement at the Tuesday, Feb. 11 Board of Supervisor's meeting, regarding the new County well drilled on Dublin Drive.

"In December, 2013, approximately nine acre feet of water was pumped out of a new well on Dublin Drive in the Madera Ranchos as a test to see how this 48-hour pumping would adversely affect the neighboring private wells and confirm water flow. [County Engineer] Kheng Vang was overseeing this project on behalf of Madera County, Madera Ranchos Special District MD10a and the Oversight Committee from District MD10A.

When I spoke with Michelle Roberts, who is President of this District MD10A

Oversight Committee, she told me that this project represented \$1.2 million from the reserves of the rate payers of district MD10A. She also told me that Madera County would mitigate any problems that may arise from this project. This \$1.2 million was intended to be used to replace the failing original pipes in District MD10A as a result of increasing the quarterly rate payers' rates by about \$90.

The County of Madera purchased this lot on Dublin Dr. for \$48,000 according to County Contract. This lot on Dublin Dr. is outside the boundaries of District MD10A. We property owners of Madera Ranches that are not part of this Oversight Committee

Please see **DESIST** on P. 22

Nevarez Will Not Seek Election

Madera County District 1 Supervisor, Manuel Nevarez, has decided not to run for the District 1 seat in the upcoming June election. Nevarez was appointed by Governor Brown on March 8 of last year to complete the term left vacant by the election of previous District 1 Supervisor Frank Bigelow to the California State Assembly. Nevarez' term will end in December, 2014.

"This decision was extremely difficult because I enjoy representing District 1 and fighting for the things that I believe are important to us," Nevarez said. "It has been a blessing to work on many different issues with many different people with one focus: to improve Madera."

In the short amount of time he has been on the

Board, Nevarez has held true to the words he spoke at his first Board meeting, namely to learn the issues, understand the concerns of the people and continue to develop

strong governance skills.

Supervisor Nevarez has addressed numerous contentious issues which include High Speed Rail (HSRA), impact mitigation to make Madera County whole, fighting for his constituents in Continental Estates to obtain a new well based on a 2009 settlement agreement, Tesoro Viejo

development and Gunner Ranch development. He is also working with the Board to seek solutions to the current drought and water issues. Nevarez will continue his work with HSRA to bring benefits to the County as well as meetings with stakeholders in the water community.

"I am extremely proud of the work we have been able to accomplish over the

past year," Nevarez said. "We still have a great deal of work ahead of us, and I will continue to work hard for my district. I'm not done yet!"



District 1 Supervisor Manuel Nevarez will not seek election in the upcoming election.

CORRECTION • CORRECTION

In the January issue of the Ranchos Independent, Madera County Sheriff/Coroner candidate Greg Noll's name was misspelled "Greg Knoll." We are sorry for any confusion or misunderstanding this may have caused.

Michael Keitz Seeks Reelection as District Attorney

District Attorney Michael Keitz has announced his plans to seek another four-year term as Madera County's top elected law enforcement official.

"Crime did not go down during the recent economic recession, in fact, it went up significantly," Keitz said. "In this time of ever increasing serious crime, my experience and track record make me uniquely qualified to serve as the District Attorney

and seek justice for the people of Madera County."

Keitz said he was optimistic about the future, although the recent recession, countywide budget cutbacks, and the early release of inmates through prison realignment had brought unprecedented challenges to his office.

Keitz first started his career in law enforcement when he became a Madera

County volunteer reserve deputy sheriff in 1980. Reserve Deputies serve as actual deputies and perform the same functions – patrol shifts, investigations and also arrests of suspects, he said. "That's a very valuable perspective to have when you are a prosecutor. To see crime first hand and know what law enforcement is faced with

Please see DA on P. 20



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Letters

Dear Editor:

I would like to know more about a local organization that sent an email to me and I don't know how they got my email address.

I am inquiring about the Taxpayers Association of Central California. I "Googled" the name of the organization and the only thing that came up was an invitation to "Like" them on Facebook. I went to the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association website and could find no mention of a Central California association. I contacted the California Taxpayers Association and received an email that they have no affiliation or knowledge of the Central California organization.

I am concerned about the legitimacy of a group that represents themselves as a Central California citizen's organization in order to endorse candidates running for office, but has no transparency.

Who is the Tax Payers Association of Central California? What is their charter, and where can I go to find out how many members they have in Madera County?

I understand that there are many ways to use social media to further the campaign of a political candidate. In this case, the email I received was an endorsement of Gary Johns for County Supervisor.

I just want to find out more about the people sending the message and what they stand for.

Sincerely,

Laura LaPorte
Bonadelle Ranchos

Dear Editor:

Since the beginning of our Republic, political campaigners have sometimes chosen to use negative campaigning, otherwise known as "smear" campaigns, to

further their political ends. From the times of John Adams and Thomas Jefferson, to the effort to scare voters about President John F. Kennedy's Catholicism, candidates have used a variety of tactics to raise questions about their opponents, in an effort to gain support for their unmeritorious cause. History tells us of one such campaign waged by Senator Joseph McCarthy of Wisconsin. For nearly six years the Senator used unfounded allegations without regard to evidence, unproven accusations, and generally demagogic attacks on the character and faithfulness of American citizens.

Over the past several weeks there have been a number of questionable newspaper ads placed by the individual seeking to obtain the Office of the District Attorney, and who professes in these ads to run a clean campaign. Speaking to the content of the advertisements, Madera County District Attorney Michael Keitz made the following comments:

"Throughout the more than two decades that I have served the people of Madera County both as a Deputy District Attorney and as your District Attorney, I have never been confronted by such a disingenuous attempt to smear my integrity. There have recently been newsprint ads containing accusations that I am refusing to debate the issues facing our County. Allow me to state very clearly that if my opponent or his campaign staff had extended the courtesy of contacting me with the schedule for such meetings, I would have considered the invitations. Just as I considered and accepted the recent offer made by the Oakhurst Democratic Club to participate in their forum. To accuse me of somehow dodging such encounters belies the confidence I have in my office, my staff, and my record in the office I am privileged to hold."

Please see **LETTERS** on P. 6

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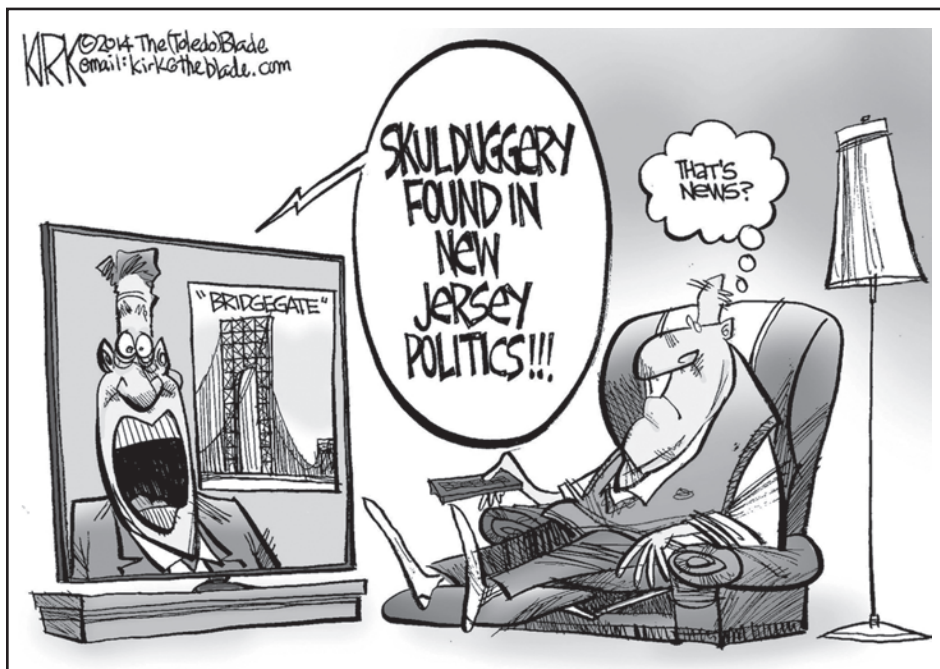
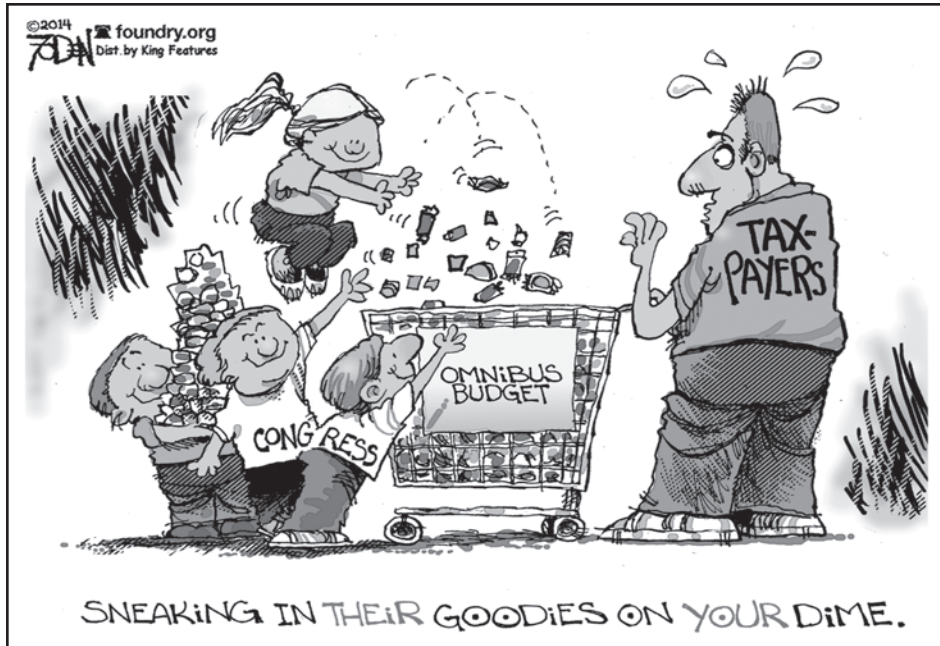
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Guest Editorial

Heroism be Damned

By Rich Lowry

The movie "Lone Survivor" didn't get any major Oscar nominations. If it had, perhaps it should have been nominated for Most Unlikely Politically Incorrect Picture of the Year.

It's based on the true story of a mission in Afghanistan that goes disastrously wrong. A four-man team of Navy SEALs hunting down a Taliban commander is stumbled upon by a couple of goatherds in the mountains of Kunar province. Deciding to let them go, even though it will compromise them, the SEALs are subsequently outnumbered in a fierce firefight. Three of them are killed, and a Chinook helicopter attempting to relieve them is downed, killing another 16 Americans. The only survivor is a SEAL named Marcus Luttrell, who is played by Mark Wahlberg and wrote a book about the mission.

None of this is remotely controversial material. How could anyone be offended by a movie about a Navy SEAL fighting with everything he has to save himself and his buddies and improbably surviving an epic ordeal? Yet the brickbats have been flying from the snotty left: Propaganda. Simplistic. Racist. "Lone Survivor" has run up against part of the culture that can't stand the most straightforward depictions of American heroism and the

warrior ethic.

A reviewer in The Atlantic worries that movies like "Lone Survivor" "resemble multi-million dollar recruitment videos geared toward the young and the impressionable." There is no doubt that the SEALs are portrayed as noble and heroic, for good reason: They were. But a recruitment film? The implicit message is that if you become a SEAL, you, too, can be faced with excruciating life-and-death decisions in hostile territory. You, too, can get shot up and killed.

A writer in Salon complains that the targeted Taliban commander "is presented as a terrible guy," and we don't learn enough about the Taliban fighters attacking the SEALs. Yes, if only we knew whether or not the Taliban commander, Ahmad Shah, had a troubled upbringing, that would change everything.

In perhaps the most preposterous critique, a critic in LA Weekly says the attitude of the SEALs in the movie is "Brown people bad, American people good." What a stupid smear. The proximate cause of the impossible situation of the SEALs is precisely their decision to let a few unarmed "brown people" go.

It is certainly true that "Lone Survivor" is not Fellini. It is about as subtle as an RPG round. But it captures something important: the otherworldly fearlessness and grit of our best fighters. If this story -- the inevitable cinematic embellishments, aside -- weren't true, you would be hard-pressed to believe it. These are extraordinary men, and the tale of their valor deserves to be told over and over again, whatever you think of the Afghan War or the broader war on terror.

Several years ago, Hollywood made a bunch of tendentious anti-Iraq War movies, all of which flopped. "Lone Survivor" is one of the few recent war movies that have been a success at the box office. It's not hard to understand why. It takes a perverse hostility to all that is great and good in the U.S. military not to find it gripping and inspiring.

Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review.

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

LETTERS cont. from P. 4

Speaking on the topic further, Keitz noted, "It seems that like others who have sought to serve the people, my opponent believes that innuendo, half-truth and demagoguery will win people over to his side. It seems to me that this hasn't worked for him in his prior races, but it's important that anyone seeking to hold public office, and particular, that of the chief law enforcement officer of the county, should understand the basic need for candor and honesty, most importantly, the people of Madera County deserve nothing less."

Friends of Keitz for DA 2014
Madera

Dear Editor:

Your editorial on California water (Water, Water ... Nowhere! - January 2014 edition) was like hitting a bull's-eye on a moving target! This was an exquisitely written and researched editorial.

Thank you.

Reader, if you haven't read it, do so.

Besides water, we need infrastructure. We need to improve the "spinal cord" of California, the one that carries 90 percent of the commerce in the state and has an infinite number of destinations, not just a few whistle stops: Highway 99.

The Democratic voting majority in California is Hispanic. The jobs of those affected by the agricultural downturn [from lack of water] are the very people who put Jerry Brown, Costa, Boxer, Feinstein, Pelosi - pick someone - in power.

Do they realize the attempt to make all of California a "Disneyland" with its high speed train and give these "officials" a legacy, for their egos, is to the detriment of the future of California? And a threat to their livelihoods?

How many field workers can afford a ticket on the "Train of the Future" when they are out of work because the fields they used to work are fallowed for no surface water? Or have been taken for rail right of way? All because we never spent any money on water conservancy? Instead we want to spend your taxpayers' dollars on a fantasy that strokes egos of Democratic incumbents who don't care about the real issues because it may take some work on their part.

Losers we voted in ... our fault.

The question is how do we get rid of them now? Why do we keep voting these people into office?

Beats me.

Let's talk about the water coming out of the San Joaquin River from Millerton Dam to "restore" the salmon run - which, by the way, has been gone for over 40 years. You'll never be able to catch one legally in your lifetime if they do return. They will be on the "endangered" list forever.

There is no river water running under the 145 overpass for more than three years now. How does it get to the ocean? It doesn't unless there's a high runoff year via the Eastside Bypass. So much for the ocean return to spawn naturally. Planted, by the way, from below the dry section to the wet section above Mendota pools via TRUCK.

The Department of Fish & Game (DFG) in its published plan for the restoration of the salmon wants to kill every other warm water fish species from Friant dam to the 99 overpass to allow the fry to survive. That is trout, bluegill, bass, catfish, etc. Warm water fish.

Salmon are cold water fish.

Lots of fishermen use that resource every year to catch planted trout, bass, to which the DFG says, "Fish the Kings!"

What an attitude.

Again, Water, Water ... Where is it Jerry?

Your government in action. I Wish I had more better to say.

Kim Schneider
Madera Ranchos

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

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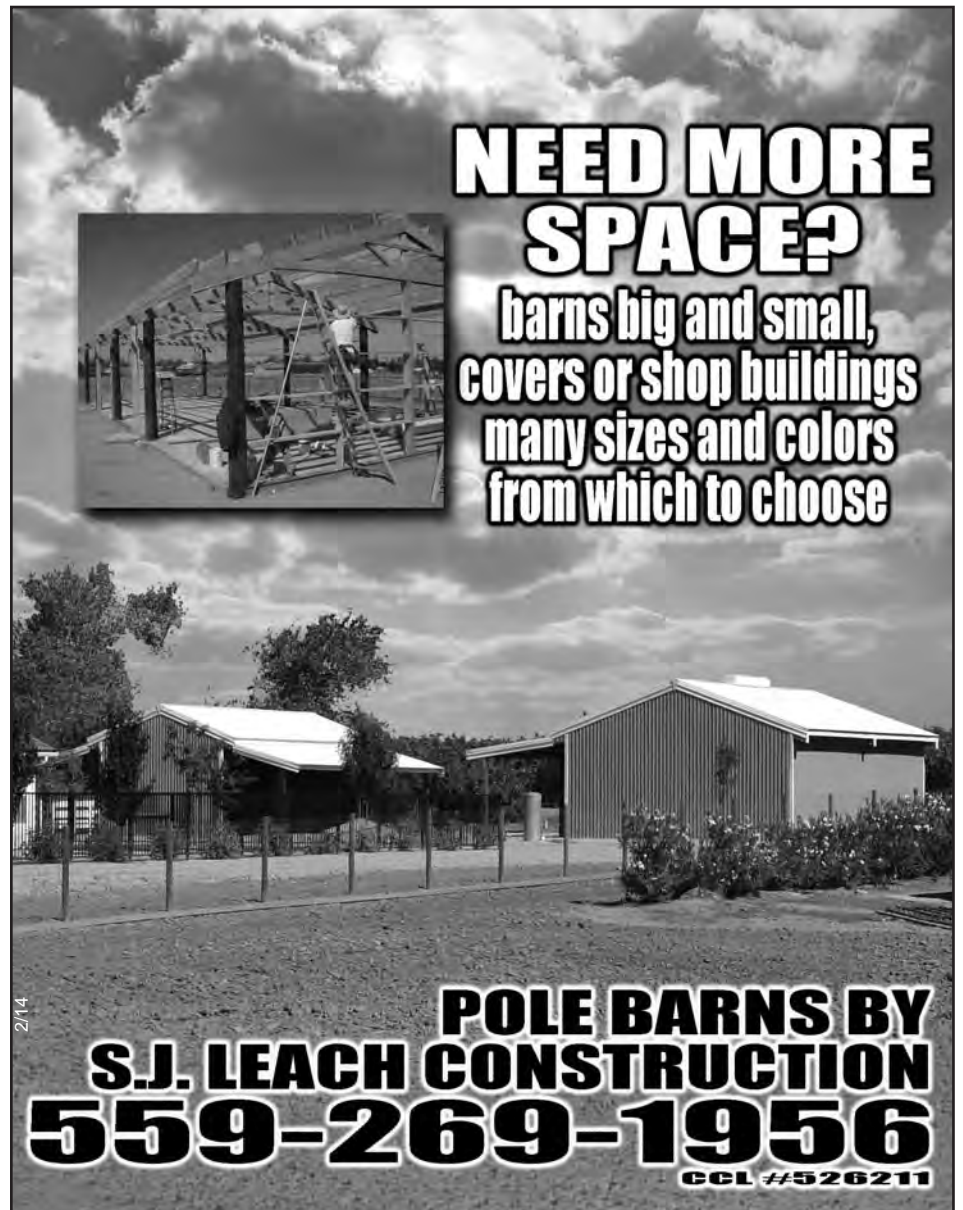
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Customer *Non-Service*

Working in the customer service industry is no piece of cake. No matter the service, it is often long hours, mostly on your feet for crappy pay. I left the business nearly 10 years ago and wouldn't want to go back. I remember how I was often treated, the people that looked down on you and believed their time was more valuable than anyone else's. I try to keep those days in mind when interacting with those working in service. But some people just shouldn't work with the public; they just don't have the attitude for it. Bad service can ruin your day every bit as much as a bad customer can ruin your shift.

I'm a bridesmaid in an upcoming wedding and the bride-to-be asked me to go wedding dress shopping with her. Naturally, I was delighted. It was a Friday morning and she had chosen a big chain store. She had no idea what kind of dress she wanted, she didn't even have a particular style in mind so she was like a blank canvas, all the more fun for me since I was going to pretend she was my life sized Barbie for a few hours. We waited around for more than 10 minutes looking for someone to help us. It was like a puffy, white, ghost town. No customers, no employees. Finally we took it upon ourselves to commandeer a changing room. I started grabbing different gowns to get a feel for what she wanted, hauling them into the little cubicle. Note to anyone who hasn't done this before: wedding dresses are heavy. Don't be a hero. You don't need to make it in a single trip. I think I'm still sore.

We were doing pretty well. I would help her shimmy into a gown and then she would sashay out to the pedestal in front of the wall of mirrors and picture herself at the altar. When we finally found an associate, she was uninterested, unfriendly and unhelpful. Her surly expression did nothing to enhance what should have been a magical experience. I assumed she was helping other customers, but they must have been invisible because I still hadn't seen anyone else in the bridal section of the store. I was close to opening my mouth and saying something, but my friend, being more of a pacifist, asked me to just let it go. So I bit my lip and allowed her to be ignored while I did my best to pick up the slack.

A few hours and about a million dresses later, we found it. She looked like a princess and I cried like a baby – not going to lie. She took off the gown and I hauled it up to the absentee sales associate to ask her how we went about ordering the correct size, to which she responded that

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



the people at the front will have to check the computer. This was one of those stores that was bridal boutique in the back, formal attire in the front. I glanced to the front register and saw one employee with a line of about six people stacked up. I pointed to a computer on the little desk in the corner and asked if it was possible to look the information up there. With a heavy sigh and an eye roll – clearly she didn't work on commission – she told me that she didn't know how to work the program. Okay, I don't know the inner workings of that particular store, but it does seem a little strange that the woman assigned to the bridal gown section is unfamiliar with how to go about ordering ... wait for it ... a bridal gown.

My friend, who at this point had just stepped out of the changing room in her street clothes, saw I was about to release the kraken, so she grabbed me by my arm and hauled me to the register, still lugging the thousand pound wedding dress. We waited in line only to find out that the gowns had to be ordered from the bridal section of the store. Needless to say, I have no idea exactly what happened next because evidently a vein popped on my forehead so the bride-to-be sent me to cool off and get a smoothie. I do, however, know that she didn't end up buying the dress. Madam cranky pants must have finally gotten to her, too.

Here's the thing: we are all human, and humans have bad days and take it out on people who don't deserve it. I get that. I know one mean customer can set the tone for the entire shift. But at some point you have to put on your big girl (or boy) pants and find a way to plaster a smile on your face and do your job. Maybe this woman didn't feel well, maybe there is turmoil in her home life, or maybe she just hates her job, I don't always like my day job, but if you can't even muster up the strength to be mildly pleasant and make the sale, then I think you're working on the wrong side of the store. Perhaps it's time to transfer into the stockroom with the mannequins.

A Pox on Pots & Pans

Do you hate scrubbing dirty, baked on gunk in pots and pans as much as I do? You can't (or shouldn't) put them in the dishwasher so there is no other alternative but to wash and dry them by hand. I hate it so badly I've often said I wish I had a larger freezer so I could buy frozen dinners to avoid the pots and pans. I guess I began that attitude early in my life. When my sisters and I were old enough to wash the dishes after each meal, we had to clear off the table and do the dishes. Every time we got the opportunity, we would leave a sticky pot in the sink to "soak" until it was easier to wash. Well, I guess we had tried that trick once too often for my mom. We had finished the dishes with a pan soaking in the sink and we went to bed. We had just gotten into bed thinking we were safe when - you guessed it, here comes mama - we got up immediately and finished our job.

Didn't try that trick again for a while.

Short of throwing the dirty ones away and replacing them with new ones which would be extremely costly, I found the answer: Aluminum foil! Don't get me wrong, I still love to cook and I know the consequences of cooking with pots and pans, but I do look for things to make the job of cleaning up easier.

Foil made from a thin leaf of tin was sold commercially from the late 19th century into the 20th century. Tin foil was replaced by aluminum foil in 1910 in Switzerland. The first use of aluminum foil in the United States was in 1913 for wrapping Life Savers, gum and candy bars.

Foil is used in cooking other than tenting the roasting turkey during the holidays. Ever thought of folding a sheet of foil to fit the brownie baking pan? Fold a length of foil to fit the bottom of the baking pan with a few inches left over on each side. Do this both ways, and pour in the batter and bake. When the brownies are done and



cooled a bit, pull up on the "cuffs" and the brownies come out and you have a pan with no baked-on crust. Or when you take something out of the oven you aren't going to serve for a while, but don't want it to cool too much, cover it with aluminum foil until ready to serve.

Pot Roast Wrapped in Foil

3 T cornstarch
 4 tsp. onion powder
 3 tsp. brown sugar
 2 tsp. salt
 1 tsp. pepper
 1 tsp. garlic powder
 2 onions cut into quarters
 1 lb. small red potatoes, left whole
 6 carrots cut into 3 inch pieces
 1 T soy sauce
 1 T Worcestershire sauce
 4 stalks celery, cut into 2 inch pieces
 4 pound boneless beef pot roast (chuck)
 Preheat oven to 300 degrees.
 Combine the dry ingredients in a small bowl.
 Tear off a sheet of aluminum foil longer than both sides of the baking pan you are using. Place loosely in roasting pan. Place the vegetables on the foil in the pan and sprinkle with the soy sauce and Worcestershire sauce. If you can, pull the roast apart and coat with the dry mix, making sure to get as much on the meat as possible. Place the meat on the vegetables and pull the two end pieces of foil together and fold together to seal, then pull the two side pieces of foil together and seal. Depending on the size of the roast, you may have to use another piece of foil. Make sure there are no openings in the package.

Place in the oven and cook for 3½ to 4½ hours until the roast is fork tender. The juices can be used as is, or heated in a

Please see **RECIPE** on P. 9

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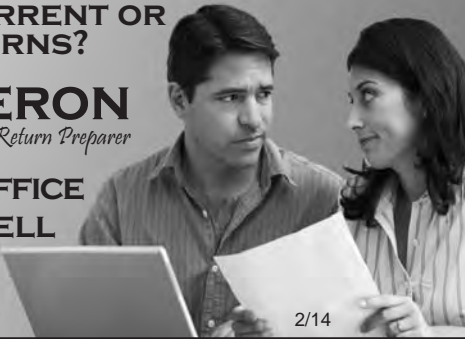
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*I support the principle that taxes should be approved by
those who pay them.*

Ray A. Krause, Jr., Candidate
Madera County Supervisor, District One 2014

There is no greater part of the American dream than home ownership. Whether you are an aspiring home owner or an existing one seeking to protect your rights, Proposition 13 has kept the dream alive for millions of Californians by keeping "tax and spend" politicians from helping themselves to your property.

Through its newsletters and slate card voter mailings, the Save Proposition 13 Committee is dedicated to widespread dissemination of information to the public in support of California's historic Proposition 13. Authored by the legendary Howard Jarvis and passed by California voters in 1978, Proposition 13 cut property taxes by two-thirds and put a limit on future real property tax increases. The Save Proposition 13 Committee seeks broader understanding of and support for maintaining the Proposition 13 tax cut.

Watch for their endorsement of our candidacy in your mail box soon.

Paid for Ray Krause for Supervisor FPPC#1359463

2/14

RECIPE cont. from P. 8

small pan with some cornstarch for gravy.

Need a quick appetizer? This one will dirty a bowl and pan, but if you line the baking pan with foil shouldn't be too hard to clean up.

Sweet & Sour Meatballs

- 1 jar sweet & sour sauce
- 1 tsp. garlic salt
- ½ tsp. to 1 tsp. crushed red pepper flakes (to taste)
- 2 pounds frozen meatballs
- 1 medium red bell pepper – cubed
- 1 20oz. can pineapple chunks, drained

Preheat oven to 450 degrees. Line a 15x10x1 inch baking pan with aluminum foil – set aside. In a large bowl combine the sweet & sour sauce, garlic salt and red pepper flakes. Add the meatballs, cubed bell pepper and drained pineapple.

Stir to coat evenly. Pour into foil lined pan, making sure meatballs are in a single layer.

Bake 25 minutes or until the meatballs are hot. Stir a couple of times during the baking, spooning sauce on meatballs. Serve warm.

A few weeks ago, Jay Varney and his wife Amy were in the office talking to Randy about advertising. Jay is the present Chief of Police in Chowchilla (my home town) and is running for the Sheriff of Madera County. As they were leaving, Mrs. Varney commented on this column and I invited her to send me one of her

recipes and in a few days the following recipe arrived.

Black Bean and Chicken Chili

- 4 skinless, boneless chicken breasts cut into 1 inch pieces.
- 2 medium red pepper, chopped
- ½ medium onion, chopped
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 3 T olive oil
- ¼ C chili powder
- 2 tsp. ground cumin
- 1 tsp. ground coriander
- 2 15oz. cans black beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 28 oz. can diced tomatoes NOT drained
- 1 C water

Sauté chicken, red peppers, onion and garlic in oil until chicken is done. Add chili powder, cumin, coriander and cook for 3 minutes. Stir in beans, tomatoes with their liquid and water. Bring to boil, lower heat to simmer and simmer for 15 minutes uncovered. Serves 8 or 10.

Thank you Amy – sounds delicious.

After the Varneys left I was talking to Randy about inviting all the candidates to send their favorite or family favorite recipe. Invitations have been sent and those received will be printed in the next two columns. Should be fun.

Don't forget the Chamber of Commerce-sponsored Crab Feed – Friday, March 7 at the Dante Club in Fresno. Tickets are \$45 each or a table of 10 is only \$400. Tickets are still available from any Chamber member or at the Chamber of Commerce office.

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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×		-		+	
	÷		+		5
+		×		÷	
	-		×		18
15		10		1	

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25th Celebration Big Hit with Guests

By Verlaine Elinburg

On Jan. 26, the Ranchos/Hills Seniors had an open house, celebrating its 25th Anniversary. It was a tremendous success with Helen Lowell, the Senior Center historian, presenting the history of the Center. On large poster boards, with pictures and text under each picture describing each photograph, the different time periods and stages of the additions and the remodeling of the Center were presented, along with the different presidents of the Center and the terms they served. Approximately 120 guests visited the Center, comprised of past, present and future members and invited guests, who donated their time and money to the success of the Senior Center.

The Seniors celebrated Valentine's Day. Josie Turner, with the help of our event decorator, Bobbie Farina, decorated the hall with white and red tablecloths and red and white center pieces with scattered heart-shaped candy kisses for the approximately 40 members who attended the Valentine's Potluck Party. We all had fun visiting and sharing

The reason we have different fundraisers is that we are self-sustaining with no government handouts. Just like our homes, bills come due each month. All of the labor at the Center is donated by the membership and volunteers.

stories. Many of us are not able to express our feelings to the people who matter the most in our lives; it is a task which is not easy for everyone. Some of us are more expressive than others and then there are others among us who find it especially difficult to explain and express true feelings. The Seniors, through years of different stages of feelings, often can now share with each other how they feel about different topics and are comfortable with their feelings. Of course, being from a different era, we still hold back if we feel we're possibly being offensive to the other person.

It is official: the Ranchos/Hills Seniors will not be having its annual Cycle for Seniors fundraiser event in 2014. Changes occurred and we did not have sufficient time to recruit volunteers for the event. We will be back next year. Because of the loss of revenue due to the cancellation of Cycle for Seniors, the Ranchos/Hills Seniors will be having different small fundraisers during the year to compensate for the loss. At present, we will be having a fundraiser celebrating St Patrick's Day. We are hosting a fundraiser St Patrick's Day Dinner at the Ranchos/Hills Seniors Center, 37330 Berkshire Drive, Madera Ranchos on Saturday, March 15 at 6 p.m. A donation of \$18.50 is requested and the menu will include Corned Beef and Cabbage, vegetables, salad, bread,

dessert, coffee or tea. Wine will also be available. For more information, or to buy tickets, you can call 645-4864. The community is invited and payment is required when you sign-up or make reservations. Space is limited, so sign-up early. The cutoff date is March 8. If you are not able to come in and sign-up, you can call Joann at 645-5337 or fax a request to 645-4830. You can also email the Center at rhseniors@att.com. A member will come and assist you with the payment. We also have another fundraiser scheduled for later in the year.

Are you ready to give your collectables a new home? The Seniors' Boutique is having a Doll & Collectable Sale. Any dolls or doll-related items, or any vintage and collectable items would help the Center. While you are performing your spring cleaning, if you are no longer in need of your dolls and collectables,

we have some seniors ready and waiting for your donations. They plan to pretty them up and find them new homes. If you are unable to travel to the center at 37330 Berkshire to drop off the items, call Joann at 645-4864 and a member will come and pick them up.

The reason we have different fundraisers is that we are self-sustaining with no government handouts. Just like our homes, bills come due each month. All of the labor at the Center is donated by the membership and volunteers.

The Sight & Sounds of the South, our 11-day Southern Journey to Nashville, Bardstown, Louisville, Memphis, Gatlinburg, Ashville and Atlanta is full. This trip closed early.

Mums are for sale at the Senior Center. The donated plants are three plants for \$10 or one for \$3.50.

The Department of Health comes periodically to the Center for free checkups. The screenings include: Personal health history review, blood pressure and blood sugar test, nutrition and health education and a low-cost blood test is available. The health screenings are for 50 and above. For referrals to medical providers and community services, the contact number is 675-7893 to make an appointment.

A nutritionally balanced lunch program is available Monday through Friday at 11:30 a.m. A suggested price for 60 years and older is \$1.75. Reservations are needed 24 hours in advance prior to 11 a.m. so remember to call Joann at 645-4864 and also notify the center if

Please see SENIOR on P. 12

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you need to cancel or change your reservation.

We have a growing exercise program being held on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at 10 a.m. The participants are getting more than just exercise by attending. They have fun, share laughs, meet new friends and get updates on old friends, their fellow members and get current news on what is happening at the Center and in the Madera Ranchos community. There is room for you and you may attend all three days or just one or two of them.

On Tuesdays at 12:15 p.m. are a variety of card games to be enjoyed. Come and learn new games. On Wednesday we have card bingo at 12:15 p.m. On Thursdays at 6 p.m. we have a great pot luck with poker and other great card games.

Check your calendar for daily events for each day of the week. If you do not have a copy of the newsletter, stop by the Senior Center for a copy. Additional copies are available at the Ranchos Market and Hurst Hardware and several businesses along Avenue 12. You can also contact Joann at 645-4864 and we will get one to you.

The Farmers Market at the Center has a few vegetables available as well as jams and jellies. The Boutique also has many new, handy and "on the spot" needed gift items.

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As our next Madera County Auditor Controller, Todd Miller will:

- Ensure mandatory State Audits are completed on time!
- Get our financial house in order so our county has the money it needs to improve roads and support our police and fire fighters!
- Be our fiscal watchdog and ensure that YOUR tax dollars are spent wisely!

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Day Varney

for Sheriff

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Varney for Sheriff/Coroner 2014.
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2/14

"It's going to change your life!"

That's a bold statement. I was listening to Pandora when a Netflix ad came on. After touting its features and price the voice said confidently, "It's going to change your life!" Then it hit me — it had! Netflix had changed my life! Not the whole thing, of course, but my distaste for commercials and major network programming (we don't have cable), meant that prior to Netflix I didn't watch that much TV. Now, my husband and I often sit down in the evening and watch "our shows." And like last night, because of the on-demand feature, when the storyline left us hanging we opted to watch just one more, putting us an hour later than we should be for a good night's rest. I'm not anti-Netflix now, but I'm more aware of how things can influence my life in subtle ways.

My focus for 2014 is to live with purpose — to be intentional about life and not just let it happen to me. It's not about control, but rather about choice. The overwhelming number of things we can't control can often leave us feeling like we've also lost our ability to choose. Maybe you started the year with some lofty goals and life has gotten in the way, or maybe your attitude has been, "Why try?" now is always a good time to choose some life-changing strategies ... other than Netflix.

When we built our house here in the Ranchos, one of the first things to do was to pour the cement foundation. Without it, our house wouldn't remain standing 34 years later. A mission statement is your foundation for building a life of purpose. What are you here for? What impact do you want to have? What do you want to be remembered for? Take some time to think about this and write out a few sentences stating your purpose.

We've all heard, "No one gets to the end of life and regrets not spending more time at the office." Think about and write down your top five priorities based on what you have determined as your purpose in life. They may be imbedded in your mission statement as mine are:

"I'm a child of God with a mission to love and serve Him and those in my family, neighborhood, community, and world. I use my gift of encouragement and organizing skills to help people experience peace and productivity in their lives, homes and offices."

Dictionary.com defines a goal as the result or achievement toward which effort is directed. So, you got it, the next step is to identify specific goals. These might include financial, spiritual, physical, relational, career, educational and recreational



goals. Don't include goals that you have no intention of directing effort toward. Do maintain a balance and don't try to do them all at once.

A football team doesn't enter the field with only high hopes and good intentions of scoring a goal. They come prepared with strategy and plays. So what's your strategy for accomplishing your goals?

I recently attended a "teleclass" called "Getting the Right Things Done Every Day" with Elizabeth Hagen. She suggests identifying Highly Valued Activities (HVAs) to help accomplish your goals. One of your HVAs for a relational goal might be to schedule lunch with friends once per month, or date night with your spouse. An HVA for an educational goal might be to sign up for a class or take an entrance exam.

Without scheduling time for HVAs, they're unlikely to get done. Another Hagen strategy is to create a "My Ideal Week" document. On a weekly calendar page that has the time listed in half-hour segments, sketch out blocks of time that include your current responsibilities and the HVAs you want to incorporate (you can call or email me for a free Excel template). Be sure to include time buffers for driving, interruptions, or unrealistic ideas of how long things take.

This may serve as a wake-up call that you can't do it all. Saying yes to something usually means saying no to something else. Remember to say yes to some down time too. This exercise helped me be more intentional about scheduling blocks of time for things I've pre-determined as priorities.

Life is brief and to be purposeful about the use of our time and energy is a "Highly Valued Activity." I think I can say with as much confidence as the Netflix advertiser that "It's going to change your life!"

You can contact Brenda McElroy to have questions answered at Organized by Choice (because things don't always fall into place) at P.O. Box 26152, Fresno, CA 93729, or you can email her at info@organizedbychoice.com, visit her website www.organizedbychoice.com or she can be reached by phone at 559-871-3314.

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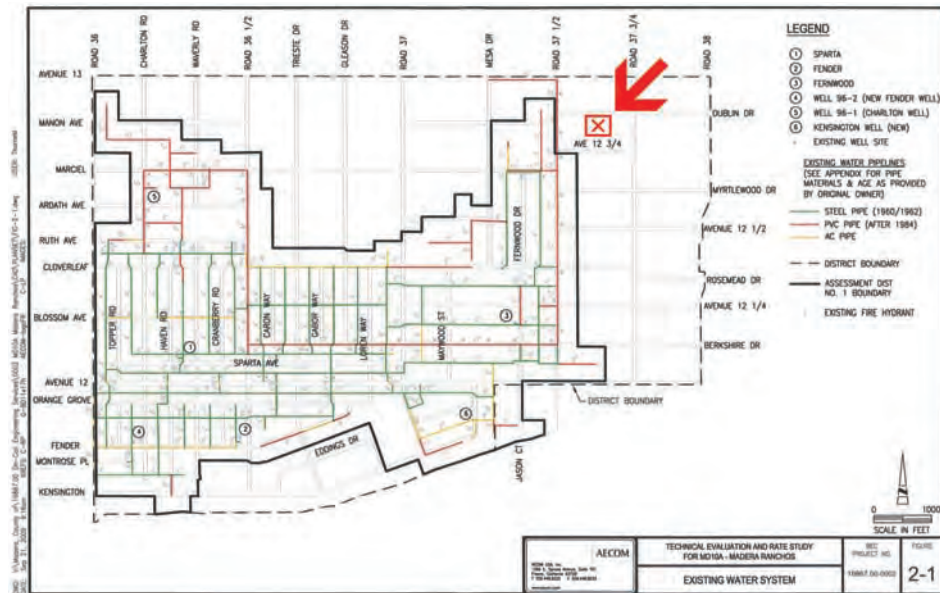
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Noble4 for Supervisor 2014 FPPC#1356611

WATER cont. from P. 2

ated, within MD10A, in 1996, when residents on the Ranchos water system agreed to a property tax assessment spread over 15 years to buy the system from a private owner and have the County upgrade and maintain it. About \$3,500 per lot was assessed, according to Michele Roberts, Chairperson for the Madera Ranchos Oversight Committee, which was created, as required by law, to oversee the County's operation of the water system and expenditure of the collected funds.

Almost \$3 million was raised and put into the water system, but by 2009 when the Technical Evaluation and Rate Study for MD10A was commissioned, it was clear that it was in trouble. It was determined then that there was a great need for repairs and upgrades in order to continue to service the connected residents both safely and reliably within the requirements of the law. It was at that point that quarterly water rates were increased and \$1 million was raised and the Oversight Committee made the decision to prioritize "new water" over system repairs, Vang said.



From the County's website, the map of MD10A and Assessment District No. 1. The heavy black line shows the existing boundaries for the assessment district. The red arrow points to the Dublin Drive Well, outside the assessment district boundary and among private well owners. Note that all other existing six wells are within the boundaries.

Other Problems

But the problems of the water system in MD10A — the location and condition of its network of piping and its wells and equipment; its diminishing capacity to serve the properties connected; the lack of a sewer system which would safely carry wastewater away from the vicinity of the water system's production wells; and how the new Dublin Well will affect private well owners near to it, both inside and outside Assessment District No. 1 — are not the only water concerns in the Ranchos. According to the draft Municipal Service Review (MSR) currently being prepared for Special District MD10A by the Madera Local Area Formation Commission (LAFCO), water is virtually an afterthought:

The Community of the Ranchos is comprised of three geographically distinct areas, commonly referred to as Bonadelle North (adjacent to SR 145) and Madera Ranchos (along Avenue 12) and Bonadelle South which lies between the other two areas. Technically, the community was established by Madera County's approval of 15 individual subdivisions which began in the mid 1950's. In order to provide road maintenance service to the area, MD10 and MD95 were formed in 1964 and 1995 respectively. A portion of MD10 as well as a small subdivision known as Continental Estates (MD 95) also provide water services in the Ranchos.

Water is the biggest issue in the minds of Ranchos residents who participated in the survey conducted by LAFCO last year, according to Executive Officer Dave Braun. The MSR, which includes the full details of the survey, was described at length in the Ranchos Independent's March 2013 feature article by Tom Zonsius, who wrote, "In 2000, LAFCOs were mandated to do a Municipal Service Review, which is a comprehensive study designed to better inform the commission, local agencies, and the community about provisioning of municipal services."

Southeast Madera County United (SEMCU), another organization, is a formal non-profit that was originally created in 2010 to address the water needs of the community and has expanded to also address transportation, schools and energy. Defined on the north and east by Highways 145 and 41, and on the south and west by the San Joaquin River, Road 32½ and

Please see **WATER** on P. 17



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Only 300 Tickets!

The Trip to Hawaii Drawing is sponsored by Fire Stations 9 and 19 and all funds raised are going toward converting Squad 19 into a mobile breathing support apparatus. Additional tickets may be purchased at The Coffee Spot, Hurst Hardware, Ranchos Café, Madera Ranchos Market, Spencer's Firearms and the Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce. Tickets are \$100 each and only 300 tickets will be sold. Credit card purchases can be made at the Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce. For more information call Station 19 PCF Captain Peter Flores at 559-232-2428 or Lesley Flores at 559-871-9175. Winner will be drawn Aug. 16, 2014.

GREG NOLL



Candidate for Madera County Sheriff/Coroner in 2014

Greg Noll has served the last 28 years in law enforcement leading by example, while utilizing the most progressive approach to reducing crime and building relationships with the community he serves. Greg currently works for the Fresno Police Department and is a Sergeant in the Patrol Division. He is a local resident who lives in Oakhurst with his wife Leslie of 27 years. Greg and Leslie lived in the Ranchos for several years and Greg knows what it takes to police rural property. Greg is committed to making a positive difference in your community through enforcement and communication of crime trends that occur in the area.

Greg holds a Bachelor's degree in Criminology from Fresno State and has served as the Executive Director of Fresno PAL (Police Activities League). He is a graduate of the Sherman Block Leadership Institute which was an eight (8) month intense leadership curriculum. Working for the 5th largest city in the State (Fresno), Greg is prepared for the challenges he will face as your Sheriff. Greg is active in his Community serving Oakhurst Sunrise Rotary.

Greg values the importance of your 2nd Amendment rights and vows to fight for law abiding citizens to carry a concealed weapons permit. A vote for Greg is a vote for Leadership by Example utilizing the most current crime fighting techniques.

If elected Sheriff Greg will:

- Make sure every person in the Madera Sheriff's Department is working to reduce crime by staying focused on criminals and serving "You" the taxpayer.
- Implement Predictive Policing Strategies and deploy personnel where crime is occurring.
- Communicate current crime trends to you by utilizing web based applications to track crime and impact crime through every media outlet available.
- Protect your 2nd Amendment rights and your right to carry a concealed weapon.
- Ensure Agriculture crime is given highest priority as the Valley is the leader in Agriculture.
- Build relationships with the Supervisors making sure they know how we can impact crime together.
- Communicate with seniors in the Community to ensure their safety and protect them from criminal activity.
- Examine staffing levels for the entire County ensuring equality throughout Madera County.

Endorsed by the Fresno Police Officers' Association which represents over 1000 Fresno Police Officers both active and retired with many living in the Madera Ranchos and Rolling Hills area.

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PREPARING FOR TOMORROW TODAY

Paid for by the Noll for Sheriff 2014
FPPC # 1353717

2/14

WATER cont. from P. 16

the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway, it encompasses not only the water systems in special districts MD10A and MD95A, but all of the Bonadelle Ranchos as well.

Supervisor Nevarez' View

Supervisor Nevarez said ag wells are the main cause of the groundwater overdraft in the Valley and that the water table will continue to drop. He said we need to prove we're good stewards and that we've exhausted all other means in order to successfully wage what will likely be a costly and lengthy fight to get back even some of the water rights that were given away to Southern California many years ago. In the meantime, he said we need money from assessments for infrastructure that would include water recharge, water banking and a metering system, and we need to pass a groundwater policy that creates money in perpetuity.

The January 30 meeting concluded with a request from LaRue for Vang and Nevarez to bring a plan for the private well owners outside the assessment boundary to the next meeting to be held in 30 days. Supervisor Nevarez said he would bring whatever infor-

mation he could find along with additional appropriately knowledgeable personnel.

For those interested in learning more about the Ranchos' water situation and other conditions and ongoing efforts, the meeting times and places of the above-mentioned organizations are listed below:

SEMCU meets every third Monday at the Pizza Factory on Avenue 12 and is working on grants for services for the community. Their next meeting will be on Monday, March 17.

The Madera Ranchos Water Oversight Committee meets on the second Wednesday every other month at 6:30 p.m. at the Ranchos/Hills Senior Center. Their next meeting is scheduled for March 12.

The Ranchos LAFCO meets every third Wednesday at 6 p.m. at the Ranchos/Hills Senior Center at 37330 Berkshire. Their next meeting will take place on March 19.

The Madera County LAFCO meets every fourth Wednesday as needed at 6 p.m. in the chambers at the Madera County Resource Management Agency Building at 2037 West Cleveland Ave. in Madera. Dave Braun will also be hosting a meeting in the Ranchos to get approval from residents for the Madera Ranchos Municipal Service Review in the near future.

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2/14

Aloha Ranchos! Hawaii Memories

By Audrey Stock

Hi neighbors,
ALOHA! I have just returned from a three week vacation on the big island of Hawaii. The state of Hawaii is made up of seven islands. The ones most people hear about are Kauai, Oahu, Molokai, Maui, Lanai and Hawaii.

My son Bob and his wife have lived on the big island since they retired two years ago. Bob and Marta were great tour guides. This is my eighth trip to the Hawaiian Islands but this time I stayed on the big island for the whole time of my vacation.

We went to most of the National Historical Parks on the island. There is much history on this island because this is where King Kamehameha was born and fought to unite the islands into the kingdom of Hawaii. I brought back

This is my eighth trip to the Hawaiian Islands ... I brought back five books from the National Parks so I could understand how and why a group of islands in the Pacific Ocean is a U.S. state.

the five books from the National Parks so I could understand how and why a group of islands in the Pacific Ocean is a U.S. state.

I felt so welcomed to the island. I met some very nice people there. My daughter-in-law planned a special breakfast at their house to introduce me to their friends. Marta also planned a beach party on the southernmost point of land in the USA. About 40 people showed up. My son also got into the act by planning a poker party because he knows I enjoy the game. Thank you Ranchos/Hills Seniors for teaching me the game. I attended the church that my son and daughter-in-law attend for the three Sundays that I was on the island. I felt so much love and welcomed everywhere I went. Now everyone wants to know when I am coming back to the island. All the people on the island greet you with a hug. Oh, I almost forgot about the lovely couple from Uganda, Africa. John and Stella hosted a beautiful brunch for me at their lovely home. They made me feel very special.

There are two active volcanoes and two inactive volcanoes on the big island. Hawaii is the only island in the group that still has active volcanoes. Because of these smoking volcanoes there are many black sand beaches and many acres of black volcanic rock that go all the way down to the Pacific Ocean. Everyone lives on the foothills of one of these volcanoes. Here I am 5,000 miles from home and I am watching the Super Bowl (way to go Sea Hawks) and the opening of the Winter Olympic Games in Sochi, Russia. There is so much that I could share but I better stop and go buy an album to put my many pictures in.

Back home, I am busy writing this article and the doorbell rings. When I answered the door there stood my friend Mona Diaz. Mona and I both served on the Golden Valley School Board together and she is still on the Board and is now serving as the Board President. I was on the Golden Valley School Board for eight years with Mona. We both learned so much but Mona continued as a Board member after I retired. Mona used to operate the Fernwood Nursery on avenue 12 in the Ranchos. Mona and her husband and sons own and operate Diaz Trucking Company. Mona has been very active in the local Kiwanis Club and more organizations that help our Ranchos Community. People in the area have encouraged her to run for Madera County Supervisor for District Number 1. She has decided instead to take on the big job of running a campaign to be a Madera County Supervisor for District Number 1. I wish her luck. She would do a good job. There will be a meeting on April 7 at the Ranchos Middle School when you will have an opportunity to meet all of the people that are running for this Supervisor job.

Don't forget the annual Chamber of Commerce Crab Feed on March 7. You can pick up your ticket for \$45 at the Chamber office.

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*Progress not Perfection***God: There When We are Far Away**

By Mike Bailey

Hi, my name is Mike and I'm an alcoholic and an addict.

And I'm also a newcomer.

Yes, it is exactly how it sounds. I did something stupid, selfish and very hurtful to many. It goes back just a few months.

My health, as I get older, is something that truly needs to be taken care of; the correct way, not the way I and others like me care to do it. I was being seen by my doctor and an orthopedic surgeon for issues with my sciatic nerve and a torn ACL. For a long time I was taking meds as prescribed and sometime in October they just were not cutting it anymore. This is where rationalization and self-will rear their ugly heads. Instead of doing what a 3½-year sober, reasonable person would do, I decided to do it my way. Or, should I say the way "Old Mike" would do it. I called an old friend that I knew could help me, and he did. I got pain meds the old-fashioned way. There is not one excuse for doing what I did. My sponsor has made me well aware of that fact. My

biggest mistake was not being honest with a lot of people, but most of all myself. I need to apologize to my children, wife, parents and many more.

Middle January of this year, I took it to another level. Still in recovery from knee surgery, I started getting stomach pains. I will let you figure out the gory details. They were very flu like and something I experience about ever 4-6 weeks. Nausea and all the other perks that come with the stomach flu, except I had one major added discomfort: A burning in my intestines that literally brought me to tears. I was attempting to work something out for pain meds but to no avail. So, about 9:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 15, I hopped in my SUV and bought a pint of vodka. I drove home, sat in my vehicle for a while thinking about what I was about to do. I took approximately 1½ sips and realized that was really stupid. The pain multiplied and a few hours later I was at the emergency room. The good people at Saint Agnes admitted me and found that not only did I have ulcers but diverticulitis. They did not say that 30 years of abusing my body

was the cause; I came to that conclusion myself. Now I am on the correct doctor-prescribed meds, watching my intake and doing a lot better. A smarter person would have had my symptoms looked at months ago.

This is where God comes in.

On the morning of Friday, Jan. 17 I was starting to realize what I had done and using what AA had taught me (albeit a little late). I was telling myself that I needed to tell everyone about my indiscretions. How do you do that? Where do you start? With my father, whom I had blatantly lied to in early December about taking some pills? My kids? Wife? Dear Lord where do I start? When do I start? About 10 a.m. a hospital chaplain stopped by, as they do at hospitals. He politely introduced himself, we started talking then he pulled up a chair (chaplains are usually there for just a couple of minutes). He could tell I was a little above a layman when it come to the Lord, but he could also tell I was in some turmoil. After he sat, I filled him in on everything. He listened politely, heard my story and simply stated, "Looks like we have something to pray about."

And pray we both did.

We prayed for guidance, but most of all for forgiveness. After the chaplain left I knew what had to be done, just wasn't quite

sure how to go about it.

Enter God doing for us what we cannot do for ourselves.

My wonderful wife showed up at 11:30 a.m. to drop off a few things before she went to work and she rightly lowered the hammer on me. She already was well aware of the vodka, for it was my son that had found me in pain in the car with the bottle. Additionally, what she had found at home were text messages on my phone from the person from whom I was trying to obtain the pills. The Alcoholics Anonymous Big Book is much smarter than us for it tells us over and over again how we alcoholics "tell on ourselves."

Bless her for doing what she did: She told everyone what I was doing.

The secret was out; no more hiding. God did for me what I could not do for myself. Problem solved: I prayed, God answered. I am very regretful for everything and I will make amends as the Lord sees fit. In his time not mine.

I guess I am not a newcomer anymore: 30-plus days now. I did many things wrong that are not a suggested way of recovery. For that I am truly sorry.

In His Love and Grace,
Mike B.

*The Bookshelf***Exciting Library Events Coming**

By Kalani Torres

So many things to talk about in this month's article. We now have two AWE computers. These computers are geared toward children eight and under, with many fun educational games. So far the computers have been a huge hit with kids and parents alike. I would like to thank Bill and Connie Prince, Jeff and Judy McGrath, the Friends of The Madera Ranchos Library and Pegasus Farms for the purchase of these wonderful computers.

I'm excited to also say that we have a laptop available for check out. No, you did not read that wrong. I said LAPTOP. This laptop is available to patrons who are 18 years old, with a library card and an account clear of all fines. The laptop can be checked out for two hours. The laptop does stay here in the library, but this allows patrons who need more than an hour for job applications, online tests, school work, etc. This laptop is a great source for students and job searchers alike. Also available for public use is our Covered California computer. Learn more about

the Affordable Care Act here at your library. This computer is to help get on the website and all that it offers.

Here are two things you are probably not thinking about: Flatlander's and the Summer Reading Program (SRP). I know with this cooler weather it is hard to imagine that we are already getting ready for the summer reading program, but we are. We have begun the planning process and will be starting in June with seven weeks of great fun. The theme this year is "Paws to Read." This leaves us so many opportunities to have a great time.

Flatlander's Day Parade and Craft Fair are in the beginning stages. We are sending out our applications via email. We are working on them and will have the applications ready very soon. We are excited for these two events as they bring a lot of traffic to our lovely little library. I tell you all this so you can start marking it down on your calendars. And we are asking for some help. We can ALWAYS use volunteers for Flatlander's and the SRP. Our summer program will begin in June, on Thursdays at 11 a.m., and Flatlander's will be Saturday, May 10. The

greatest need is for setup and clean up. We would love anyone high school age and older to help. There are always things to help with during both events.

Another way for you to help is donations for the SRP. We can always use donations to help fund our performers and prizes. Whether you are a local business or just a resident, any donation of any sort is always appreciated. For Flatlander's we will need a few pop up tents for our outside book sale. If you have one we could use, we would greatly appreciate it.

Ok, I think we are good on the library news. Thanks for reading with us. Come in and check us out. We love seeing you.

Happy reading.

The Madera Ranchos Library

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*Sunday and Monday Closed**Tuesday 11 a.m. – 6 p.m.**Wednesday and Thursday**11 a.m. – 5 p.m.**Friday and Saturday**11 a.m. – 3 p.m.*www.MaderaCountyLibrary.org**GVUSD Needs Bond Oversight Members**

Committee members are needed for the Golden Valley Unified School District Citizens' Bond Oversight Committee.

The Golden Valley Unified School District is now accepting applications for a representative from the following areas: Parent Club and Parent Representatives. These representatives will serve on the Citizens' Bond Oversight Committee to oversee Measure S Bond monies.

If interested, please obtain an application from the Superintendent's Office at 37479 Ave. 12, Madera, CA 93636 or you can call 645-7500.

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DA cont. from P. 3

every day," Keitz said.

Keitz first started as a deputy district attorney in the office in 1992, and was appointed as District Attorney by the Madera County Board of Supervisors in January 2009. "I was then elected by the people of Madera in 2010. That's a total of 34 years of experience in law enforcement, with 19 years as a reserve deputy sheriff with Madera County," Keitz said.

Keitz observes that, "Public safety is the number one priority. Hand in hand with seeking justice, with integrity. As the chief law enforcement officer for Madera County, I have the responsibility of deciding who is prosecuted and what the resolutions are in our cases that deliver the people of Madera County the justice that victims of crime deserve. I make those decisions, even the most difficult ones, based on what I believe represent in the best interests of the people of Madera County without regard to politics.

"My accomplishments and strong track record as a prosecutor have enabled me to be endorsed by the authors of the Three Strikes legislation – Mike Reynolds and former Secretary of State Bill Jones – and State Senator Anthony Cannella, Madera Mayor Robert Poythress, city council members Donald Holley, Derek Robinson, Andrew Medellin and Gary Svanda.

The number of prosecutions, convictions and length of sentences are way up. Keitz said his office handles between 8,500 and 10,000 cases per year, with fewer than average number of office personnel and attorneys, and given the fiscal limitations, the decisions on which cases to plea bargain or which to take to trial are difficult. Keitz said the office's diligence in prosecuting cases shows. "In my first year as DA in 2009, this office conducted 26 jury trials. In 2013, we did 60 jury trials," he said. However, the number of homicides, violent crimes and gang crimes are also up, with 20 pending homicide cases at present. "I don't recall having this many homicides outstanding during all the years I have been in the office," Keitz said. This high number of homicides greatly affects the resources available within the office, he said. "It takes an enormous amount of time, effort, and experience to prepare and resolve a homicide case. Nevertheless, we are addressing them and have had outstanding successes resulting in long prison sentences.

Realignment of offenders from state prisoners to local facilities or early release has also contributed to the increase in local crime and put local offenders back on Madera County streets faster and in an unprecedented numbers.

Keitz is also pleased with the signifi-

cant length of prison sentences given for other violent felonies like domestic violence, sexual assault, animal abusers and DUIs. Many have received lengthy prison terms with some sentences as high as 15, 25, 96 years and life without parole.

"I started as the DA at a time when budgets were very tight and this particular office has always been understaffed for attorneys, clerical staff and investigators. All things considered, I think we are doing pretty well with the just over \$4 million budget we have to work with. The county has been strapped for cash in all areas. I am very fortunate the board was able to give me a modest increase in my budget this year to hire some additional staff.

Other district attorneys' offices with a similar volume of cases typically have a staff of 21 to 22 deputy district attorneys and 12 investigators. The Madera DA's office has been functioning with 16 attorneys and just two investigators, Keitz said. A typical case load per deputy district attorney would be 350 cases, while Madera County Deputy DAs handle between 450 to 530 new cases per year. The Madera County work load is higher and the pay scale is some 15 percent less than surrounding counties, Keitz said, which makes retention of experienced personnel challenging. "Because of our lower pay scale, our office, like other Madera departments, has long been a training ground for new, inexperienced personnel."

Keitz declined to address his frequent and opinionated critics saying they were politically motivated and it wasn't productive. "It is easy for people to spout off when they are less than fully informed, don't know the law and are not the ones having to make decisions considering the limitations under which I have to run the District Attorney's office," Keitz said.

"As to the lawsuits against the District Attorney's Office, many public offices and officials are sued in our litigious society," Keitz said, "and, that's why public agencies, including Madera County, carry liability insurance." Other Madera County Departments have been sued as well, and there are suits pending even now, he said.

"It's been an honor and a privilege to serve the people of Madera County," Keitz said, "and I am looking forward to serving another four years ... seeking justice with truth and integrity."

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DESIST cont. from P. 2

challenge the legality of redirecting \$1.2 million, purchasing a lot and contracting the work on this well outside of the district. Madera County has not mitigated the problems resulting from the County using this well outside the district to feed water to District MD10A while disadvantaging many property owners of the Madera Ranches that have always had their own wells in this area of the Dublin Dr. well.

On Thursday, Jan. 30 at a meeting in the Madera Ranchos, Kheng Vang told the audience that this well is going online in June of 2014. Neighboring wells dropped up to 11 feet in the 48 hour test of pumping 1,000 gallons a minute for 48 hours from this Dublin Dr. well into the MID canal by pipe a mile away. Mr. Vang said it may be two years before water lines are put in to supply water to those neighboring property owners with their own private wells. It may take longer. No provision was made or stated to mitigate this

problem for these property owners that will, after June 2014, lose significant or total use of their wells that they have invested their own money in. Madera County has not mitigated this problem and if that was their agreement made to the District MD10A Oversight Committee as stated by their President, Michelle Roberts, on Feb. 3, 2014, then we suggest that at this time Madera County is failing to abide by their agreement with that District MD10A Oversight Committee.

We ask that you, Board of Supervisors, voluntarily put a stop and desist order on this Dublin Dr. well project in District MD10A and prevent the June 2014 online schedule. We ask that proper compensation and mitigation for private well owners be negotiated. We ask to be allowed to work as a community of rate payers of Special District MD10A and Madera Ranchos property owners combined as a united community to address options favorable for all of our water needs with Madera County agencies and representatives."

ATTENTION: Madera Ranchos Community Property Owners

On **March 31, 2014 at 6 p.m.** there will be a **meeting at Liberty High School cafeteria** to address a unification of **water issues for members of MD10A**, the existing water district for this community, and the property owners that have their own private water wells on their property. **Actions have taken place by Madera County and MD10A that, at this time, disadvantage private property owners who have their own water wells near MD10A.**

Please attend this meeting on March 31, 2014

This is an opportunity for this community to act in its own best interest.

SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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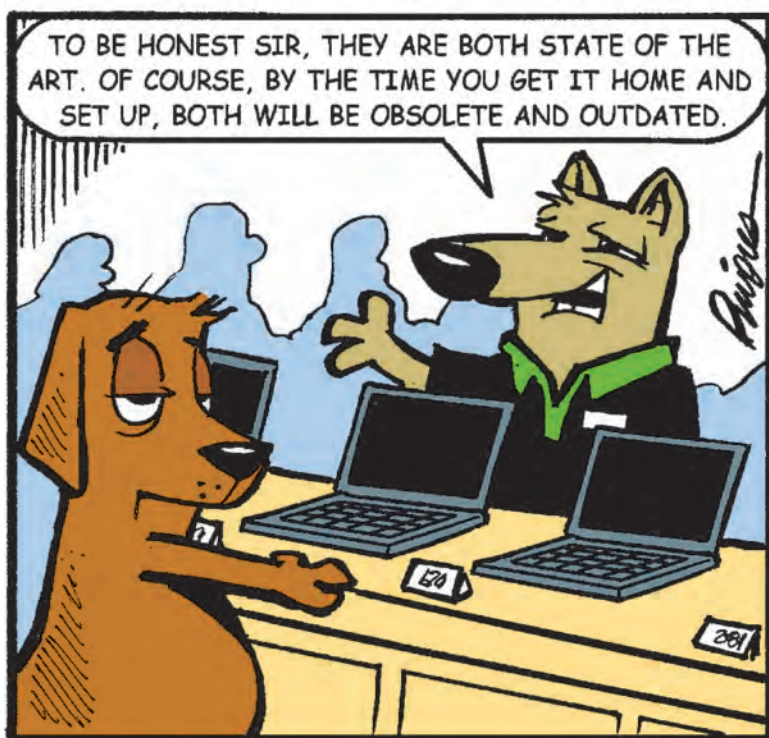
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ARIES (March 21 to April 19) Doing something nice for others is typical of the generous Arian. But be prepared for some jealous types who might try to question one of your more recent acts of kindness.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20) You're eager to take on new responsibilities. But before you do, you might want to check out exactly what would be required of you so that you don't face any "surprises" later.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20) It might be best to put off an important decision until a fluctuating situation becomes more stable. Recently received news could help resolve a long-standing family matter.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22) If you still have a problem getting that information gap closed, you might consider asking a higher authority to resolve the matter, leaving you free to move on to another project.

LEO (July 23 to August 22) A family matter needs to be dealt with at the start of the week. Once it's resolved, the Big Cat can devote more attention to that new opportunity that seems to hold so much potential.

VIRGO (August 23 to September 22) Pay attention to those niggling doubts. They could be warning you not to make any major decisions until you've checked them out -- especially where money matters might be involved.

LIBRA (September 23 to October 22) A business venture might need more of your attention than you are able to provide. Consider asking a trusted friend or family member to help you work through this time crunch.

SCORPIO (October 23 to November 21) A more-positive aspect helps you get a clearer focus on how to handle your time so that you can deal with several responsibilities that are just now showing up on your schedule.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22 to December 21) A very close friend (you know who that is!) has advice that could help you work through a confusing situation. So put your pride aside and ask for it. You'll be glad you did.

CAPRICORN (December 22 to January 19) A workplace situation could turn a bit tense. The best way to handle it is to confront it and deal with it openly. Doing so can help reveal the underlying reasons for the problem.

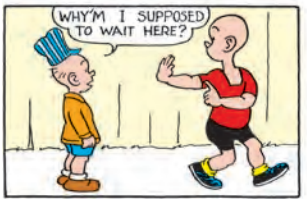
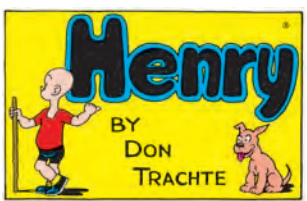
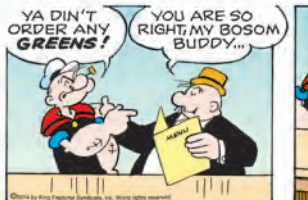
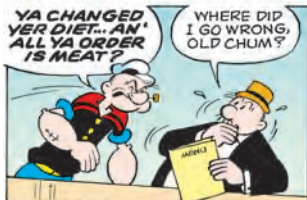
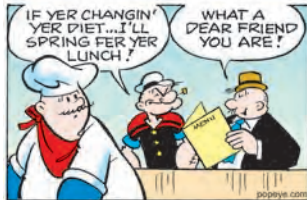
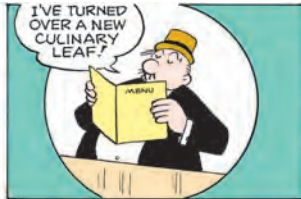
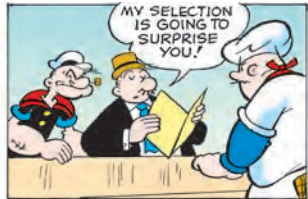
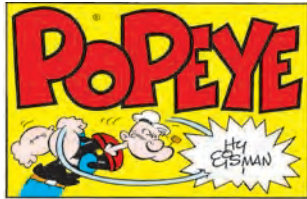
AQUARIUS (January 20 to February 18) A colleague's remarks appear to be especially cutting. But don't waste your time or your energy trying to deal with the situation. You have more important things to do.

PISCES (February 19 to March 20) Support for your work comes as a surprise from someone you thought was critical or, at least, indifferent. Your spouse or partner has big plans for the weekend.

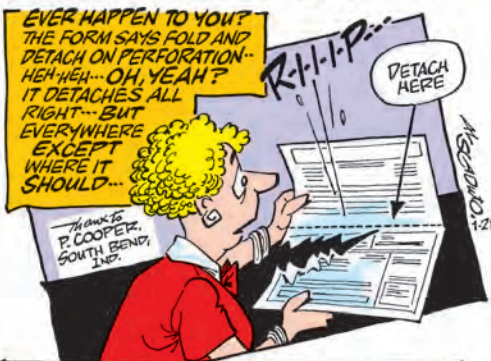
Born this Week
Your spiritual strength often acts as an inspiration to help others make decisions about their lives.

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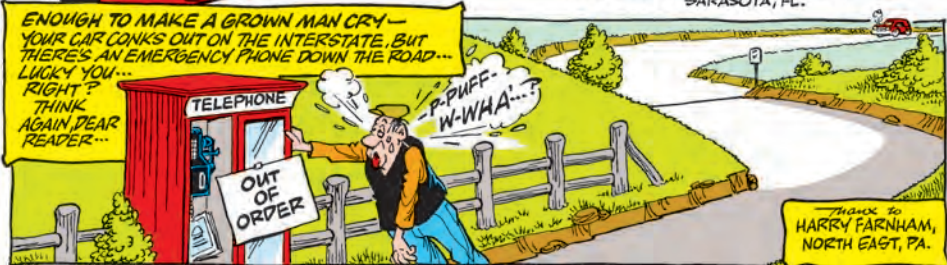
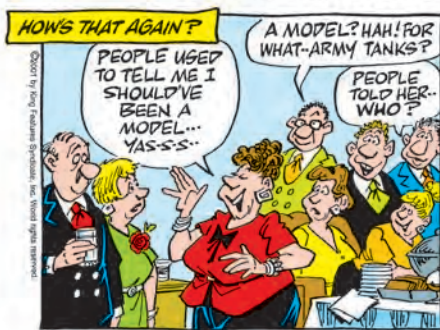
FUN PAGES



THEY'LL DO IT EVERY TIME



BY AL SCADUTO



Junior Whirl

by Hal Kaufman

PEN PEARLS! Dear Hal: I'm at a complete loss for fitting words to say to a retiring, old-time railroad worker. Any suggestions? Dear Pal: How about terchoo, terchoo, terchoo, whoop-whoop.
Dear Hal: Who was the first to improve steam engines? Dear Pal: James Watt's his name.
Dear Hal: To whom can I complain about wilted salad greens? Dear Pal: I would suggest the Dead Lettuce Office.

DOUBLE TAKE! Double this single-digit number. Turn answer upside down and divide by three. Aiaakazam, you have the original number. What's that?
The number is three.

FOLD & CUT EXERCISE
TAKE a sheet of paper, fold it in two (see illustration 2, above). Then fold it in two again (illus. 3), at right angles to the original fold.
You now have four thicknesses of paper.
Now, using scissors (or by hand), divide the paper in half (illus. 4). But before you do, see if you can guess how many separate pieces of paper you will produce.
Guess quickly, two, or three, or four, or more?
If a friend or two is at hand, let them guess, too, and then check to see who is correct.
What is the answer? No fair peeking.



MAGIC ACT! Don't let the magician fool you. His "victim" walks away. Can you find a path from top to bottom right?



SEE, HERE! Compare this shirt with any other and there are at least a dozen differences. Don't you agree? Add these colors: 1—Red, 2—Lt. blue, 3—Yellow, 4—Lt. brown, 5—Flesh tones.

SPELLBINDER

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

CHARISMA

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

Try to score at least 50 points.

Possible answers: Mica, rash.

Wishing Well

2	5	7	8	3	8	3	5	3	6	7	8	5
S	Y	A	B	A	E	D	O	V	L	F	A	U
3	8	2	8	4	8	2	6	4	5	8	2	8
E	W	L	A	S	R	O	O	W	R	E	W	O
7	2	5	8	6	8	2	4	8	2	8	7	6
R	B	L	F	V	O	U	E	T	T	H	I	E
2	7	8	6	8	7	6	5	6	8	6	5	2
S	E	E	G	R	N	R	U	O	S	W	C	U
6	7	3	5	2	4	2	3	4	5	3	4	7
S	D	N	K	R	E	E	T	T	Y	U	S	V
2	3	2	3	4	5	3	7	2	3	5	2	7
C	R	L	E	U	D	C	I	I	A	A	M	S
4	7	2	5	7	3	4	3	4	3	4	4	4
C	I	B	T	Y	S	L	C	L	E	S	S	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 ● ALL ABOUT ME: SELF —

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

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

- | | | | |
|------------|--------|---------|--------|
| Assured | Doubt | Praise | Taught |
| Contempt | Esteem | Regard | Will |
| Denial | Image | Starter | Worth |
| Discipline | Made | Styled | |

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TRIVIA TEST

By Fifi Rodriguez

- LANGUAGE: What does the verb "bibble" mean?
- FAMOUS QUOTES: Who once said, "Humor is just another defense against the universe."
- MOVIES: Which Charlton Heston movie used more than 1 million props?
- GENERAL KNOWLEDGE: About how long is the Iditarod Trail sled dog race?
- AD SLOGANS: What advertiser urged consumers to "Say it with flowers"?
- ANATOMY: Of the 206 bones in the adult body, about one-fourth are located where?
- LITERATURE: Which book written by Charles Dickens features a young boy named Pip?
- MUSIC: What was Paul Simon's first solo to hit the Top 10?
- MYTHOLOGY: Who was Hippolyta in Greek mythology?
- FOOD & DRINK: What kind of fruit is the liqueur Chambord made from?

Answers

- To drink often or much
- Mel Brooks
- "Ben-Hur"
- More than 1,000 miles
- FTD
- In the feet
- "Great Expectations"
- "Mother and Child Reunion"
- Queen of the Amazons
- Raspberry

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