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## GUILTY: LIFE IN PRISON

*Madera Ranchos resident Amy Chavoya is found guilty of murdering her adoptive daughter, 12-year-old Mariah, and torturing Mariah's brother. She now faces life in prison.*

*By Randy Bailey*

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In a story that began a little over four years ago, a Madera Ranchos woman has been convicted of torturing and murdering her adoptive daughter and torturing her adoptive son. She faces possible life in prison.

First reported in the Ranchos Independent in December, 2015, Madera Ranchos resident Amy Louise Chavoya, who was then 42, was arrested on Nov. 25, 2015 on murder charges. In addition to the murder charges, there were allegations of horrific child abuse and torture. Chavoya initially pled not guilty to the charge of murder, three counts of torture, three counts of willful cruelty to a child and dissuading a witness by force or threat, but on Feb. 11, 2020, a Madera jury felt otherwise.

**First Degree Murder**

The jury convicted Chavoya of first-degree murder of her adopted daughter, Mariah, as well as torture of Mariah and her brother Christopher. According to information released by the Madera County District Attorney's office, Chavoya faces life in state prison as a result of her convictions. In all, she was charged with a total of five counts: first degree murder of Mariah, torture of Mariah, torture of her brother Christopher, as well as two counts of felony child abuse. The abuse and torture of Christopher occurred between July 1, 2010 and March 25, 2015. The abuse and torture of Mariah occurred between July 1, 2010 and October 10, 2014, the day that Chavoya murdered her.

Chavoya was originally a foster mother to the two children in 2010 until



*Madera Ranchos resident Amy Chavoya is found guilty of murdering her adoptive daughter, 12-year-old Mariah, and torturing Mariah's brother. She now faces life in prison.*  
By Randy Bailey

she decided to adopt them, and the adoption became final in February of 2014.

Madera County's District Attorney's office said that the evidence during the trial showed that the physically abusive acts escalated over time, culminating in Mariah's death, as well as great bodily injury to Christopher.

In the story that ran in the Ranchos Independent in December 2015, there were allegations of scalding showers, beatings, starvation and the use of a stun-type gun as punishments at the hands of Chavoya. Testimony was introduced at the time by Mariah's then-14-year-old biological

brother also claiming he was subjected to similar abuse along with other children in the home. The boy claimed he was fearful to come forward with these allegations of abuse and of having to remain in the home, prior to the death of his sister.

All remaining children were removed from the home in March of 2015 by the department of Child Protective Services.

**Calls to CPS**

At the time of Chavoya's arrest, at least 20 calls were revealed to have been made to the Department of Madera County Child Protective Services, along with four written reports, when Mariah's elementary school

teachers had reportedly become concerned about the girl's high number of absences from school, her many unexplained black eyes, bruises and other injuries, consistently poor hygiene, underweight appearance and other unusual behaviors like food stealing and attempts at food hoarding while at school. At least a dozen significant dents were said to have been found in the dry wall of the Chavoya home by investigators, some of them overlapping and stained with blood and hair, including one in the girl's bedroom.

Records show that Mariah collapsed at home on Oct. 10, 2014 and 911 was called. The fire department showed up, EMS showed up and then law enforcement showed up. Mariah's father, San Joaquin County Sheriff's deputy Gerardo Flores, gave her CPR until the fire department arrived and they continued CPR. She was taken to the hospital, but she was never revived.

**Tear Not Found**

Doctors believe Mariah ultimately died from the result of a blow or blows that caused a tear internally, that caused bleeding. However, an autopsy was not able to find a tear.

In a trial that took about 23 weeks, the jury deliberated for about five days before returning the guilty verdict. Chavoya is expected to be sentenced on April 3 in Madera County Superior Court.

Chavoya's husband, San Joaquin County Sheriff's deputy Gerardo Flores has not had any charges filed against him. He is still employed by the sheriff's department.

**Madera County Supe Candidate Arrested in Ranchos on DUI**

On Jan. 29, a man running for Madera County Supervisor District 4 was allegedly driving drunk through the Madera Ranchos on Avenue 12 late that night when he lost control of his Dodge Ram pickup and crashed, causing damage to a couple of homes on Avenue 12 near Loren Way.



*Eddie Block, a candidate for Supervisor in Madera County, District 4, was arrested in the Ranchos on suspicion of DUI.*

Eddie Block was arrested by the California Highway Patrol on charges of suspected drunk driving with a blood alcohol level reported at .08, the legal limit.

After crashing, Block ran from his vehicle and law enforcement officials had to look for him. A report found on the internet said that CHP officers got a license plate and began searching the area. They ultimately found Block a few blocks away. In addition to the DUI charges, hit and run charges were added as well.

His campaign website seems to have been taken down, but Madera County Elections Offices say Block will remain on the ballot.

**County Gets New Probation Chief**

Congratulations to Chris Childers for being appointed by the Judges of the Madera County Superior Court to serve as the next Chief Probation Officer.

Currently holding the title of Deputy Chief Probation Officer, Childers brings to the job 30 years of dedicated service to the field of community corrections. His undeniable zeal for the work he performs will benefit the Probation Department and the citizens of Madera County.

Childers, who replaces Chief Rick Dupree, officially takes office on April 1, 2020. Dupree, who retired in 2019, had a decorated career as the

Chief Probation Officer, which began in October 2003. His efforts and innovation to service were appreciated by the Judges and the Madera County Board of Supervisors.



*Chris Childers, the current Madera County Deputy Chief Probation Officer, has been selected to take over the top spot for Madera County's Probation Department.*

Chief Childers is welcomed in his new capacity with the Court system, as well as a new executive level member of the Madera County management team.

On the Probation Department's web page, they state that their prime responsibility is protecting citizens from harm, including protecting citizens from harming themselves. This unique position allows them to blend their role of enforcer and helper.

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Letters

.Dear Editor:

I very much enjoyed Betty Van Valkenburg's article in your last issue in which she encouraged all of us to vote a straight Republican ticket in the upcoming election. I paraphrase President Trump's words: "What do you have to lose?"

What have the Democrats done for you or for our once great state, California? It is my opinion that our local population's most egregious act was the election of Governor Brown, followed by Gavin Newsom and now we are left grappling with:

1. A Sanctuary State
2. Felons released early from incarceration, four of whom were convicted of murder
3. The inability to remove homeless squatters from our property
4. Not caring whether, or not, our farmers have water for their crops

This is just the tip of the iceberg. The Federal Government has been just as – if not more – egregious as Betty Van Valkenburg outlined so well, and I quote: "Vote Republican unless you want open borders, a screeching halt to economic gains, the end of private health insurance, health care, education, energy, doctors, hospitals, transportation, air conditioning, food sources, city planning, farming, water and so much

more."

And so, I reiterate Van Valkenburg's plea, "Vote for the candidates with an 'R' after their name."

After all, what do you have to lose?

Valjean Jury  
Madera Ranchos


Dear Editor:

Today I was proud to see six operational electric vehicle charging stations at our Madera Walmart. I actually snapped a photo and sent it to my son in New York City who works for a Renewable Energy Company (Lend Lease – who built the 9/11 Memorial museum and adjacent building).

After placing my groceries in my trunk, I saw someone pull up to one of the charging stations and was about to ask him about the technique, when he actually walked away from his BMW which was NOT an electric nor hybrid vehicle. I was shocked and considered saying something about his lack of accountability. I wondered if Walmart had security cameras at the charging stations – if they could issue a citation or even have the vehicle towed.

Since I am a senior woman at the Wal-

Please see **LETTERS** on P. 16



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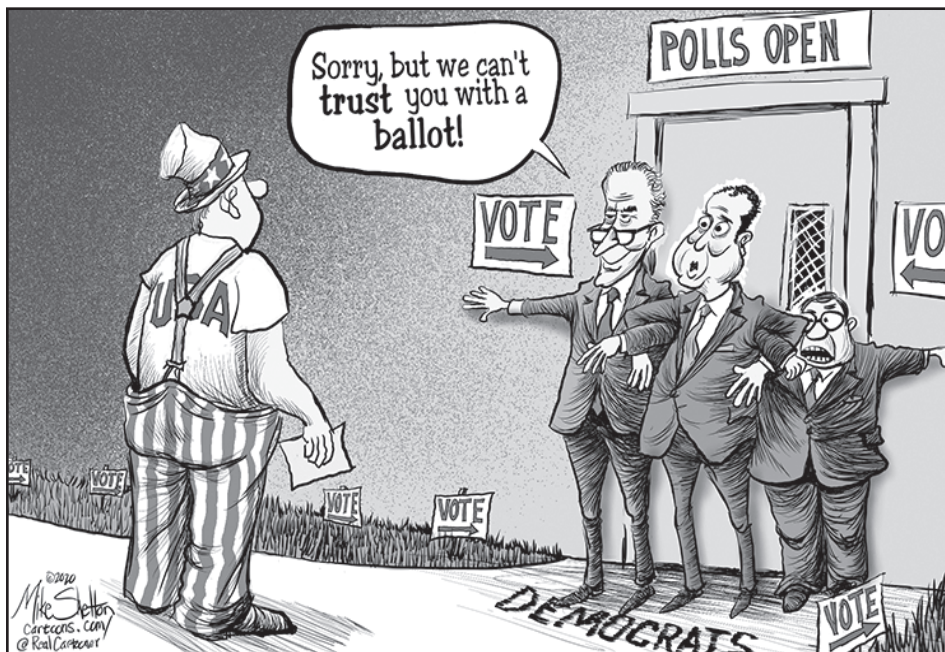
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Guest Editorial

# The Insanity of Trump Removal

By Rich Lowry

It's easy to forget what the Senate impeachment trial is supposed to be about.

It's not a fight over whether the Senate will call a couple of witnesses that the House couldn't, or didn't bother to, obtain on its own.

The underlying question is whether the United States Senate will impose the most severe sanction it has ever inflicted on any chief executive, voting to remove a president for the first time in the history of the country and doing it about 10 months from his reelection bid.

This is a truly radical step that, if it ever came about, would do more damage to the legitimacy of our political system than President Donald Trump's underlying offense.

If Trump were actually convicted, the 2020 election would proceed under a cloud of illegitimacy. Tens of millions of Trump voters wouldn't accept the result. They'd see it as an inside job to deny the incumbent president a chance to run for reelection, without a single voter having a direct say. The GOP would be brought to its knees by internal bloodletting, a prospect that Democrats surely would welcome, especially given that it would deliver them the presidency. Republicans would be out for revenge, and instead

of a halcyon return to normalcy, our politics would be even more poisonous than before.

Democrats argue that Trump can't stay in office because he's such a threat to the integrity of our elections. But the portrayal of Trump's Ukraine scheme as "election interference," as the Democrats always say, is tendentious and inapt. If the Ukrainians had complied with the Trump team's pressure to announce an investigation of the energy company Burisma, it wouldn't have changed one vote in 2020, even if former Vice President Joe Biden eventually is the Democratic nominee.

The fact is that impeachment, as my colleague Ramesh Ponnuru points out, is a weak check on the presidency. It requires a supermajority of the country to remove a president and one of the political parties being willing to nullify the choice of its own voters for president and an election he won. Both the Trump and Clinton impeachments show that this is a hateful prospect for the president's party.

The best case for what the Democrats are doing now is that Republicans impeached Clinton in the 1990s with little or no hope for conviction in the Senate, and turnabout is fair play. But it's time to conclude that this is a failed model of impeachment. It depends on a process that diverts the time and energy of the nation's political institutions as if the survival of a presidency is at stake, even when everyone knows it isn't.

Congress can hold hearings on a president's conduct, subpoena witnesses and documents and fight the executive with full force if they aren't produced, hold officials in contempt, withhold funding, deny the executive traditional forms of interbranch comity and, if it wants to put down a long-lasting marker, censure the president.

But it needn't drag the country through a melodrama based on the fiction that any president who hasn't crashed to, say, a 25 percent approval rating is going to be removed by his own party -- in other words, exactly what Adam Schiff and his managers are doing now.

*Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review.*

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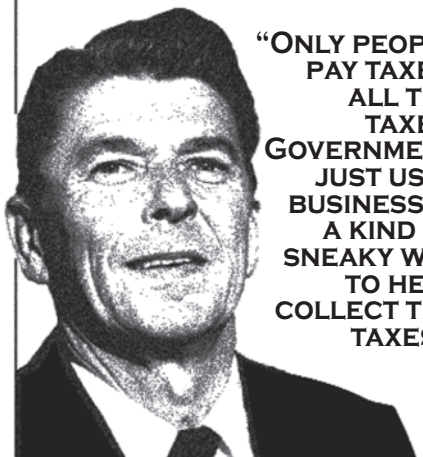
**Randy Bailey.....Publisher/Editor**

Jean Briner -- *Columnist, Advertising Sales Emeritus*

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# The Roaring 2020s

Two whole months into the new year and I find it difficult to wrap my mind around the fact that we are in a completely new decade. Does anyone else still think it's barely 2005? No? Just me? Well, anyway, here we are in another round of the roaring twenties. It's been a hundred years since the Jazz Age rolled through the history books and I can't seem to stop myself from thinking about the difference a century makes.

As a woman, the first thing I naturally think of is women's suffrage. 1920 saw the ratification of the 19th Amendment giving women the right to vote. Though there were territories, like Wyoming, that passed laws allowing women to vote long before the constitutional amendment

was ratified, this was long overdue. Our voices were finally going to be heard. Our leaders would finally have to speak to our issues. Well, we all know it wasn't that simple but eventually society caught up with the spirit of the law and look where we are today. A century later, women can do anything a man can do. We hold public office, we are doctors, lawyers, pastors, CEOs. We carve out our own paths and design our own destinies. We are no longer property or second-class citizens. We are women, hear us roar. Of course, some of my sisters, for no other discernable reason than unadulterated hatred,

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



spend more time rallying against the president than fighting for real issues like the economy or protecting unborn children. But, sadly, that's the side effect of freedom: You are free to be an idiot if you so choose.

*But, sadly, that's the side effect of freedom: You are free to be an idiot if you so choose.*

Speaking of amendments, 100 years ago the 18th amendment was passed and the country was plunged into the era of prohibition. Suddenly alcohol was illegal, which was the long awaited and much desired result of the Temperance Movement. Finally, the evil drink was conquered and with it all things wanton and lascivious. Who wouldn't want a return to wholesome? Sounds positively delightful. The problem, of course, is the fact that all prohibition did was give rise to bootlegging and line the pockets of people like Al Capone and George Remus who, if you don't know, made their fortunes selling liquor. I know what you're thinking. You're thinking, "Eryn, are you telling me that even though something is illegal you can still not only procure it, but people

Please see **GENWHY** on P. 7

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GENWHY cont. from P. 6

can profit even more off of selling illegal contraband?" I know, it's shocking, but yes. Fast forward a decade or 10 and here in 2020 liquor is legal again, presuming that you are of age. Who could have seen that coming? We aren't that different from our 1920s counterparts, though. Just like then there is a substance that is causing heated debate over whether or not it should be legal to purchase and consume: Marijuana.

In the 1920s cities were being peppered with speakeasies and back alley clubs where jazz music filled the air. Suit-clad men took to the dance floor with lace and fringe adorned flapper girls to do the Charleston and other dances I don't know because I only remember the Charleston. This doesn't present that different of a picture than we have today. Of course, most clubs today are legal and you don't need a password and a desire to break the law to get in, unless you're underage. The music may not be jazz anymore, the dances are things like the "Futsal Shuffle" and the "Yummy Dance" instead of the Charleston, but from a big picture perspective it hasn't changed all that much.

The 1920s was a time of change. With the introduction of broadcast radio, information became more obtainable, entertainment became more available and the world more accessible. Suddenly average American homes had radios that could broadcast the results of the presidential election without having to wait for the next edition of the newspaper to be delivered. Then telephones started popping up in more and more houses and suddenly you didn't have to

wait days or weeks or even months for letters from distant family and friends. The world grew smaller as technology started advancing. Fast forward 100 years and you can send a message instantly on a tiny computer you keep in your back pocket. You want to see your cousin who lives two states away? Just video chat and it's almost as good as being in the same room with her. An infinite supply of information is available at the touch of a button. Of course, the flip side of this is that the availability of information has created an army of lazy researchers. Instant gratification has created a lackadaisical approach to knowledge. If you can't figure it out from the first few hits on a google search, then it isn't worth knowing. Or worse, you only read the first few hits and think you're an expert without even checking the website's credibility. I won't even talk about the people who only read headlines. This raises an interesting question, though. With all this knowledge quite literally at our fingertips, has it actually made us smarter?

So very much has changed in the last century. We have some vast improvements in equality and empowerment. We have experienced thrilling highs and agonizing lows in our economy. We have seen tyrants lead the world into war and we have seen strong, resilient commanders lead our country back to prosperity. Yet, there is still so much that remains the same. The heart of this nation, the dream so many citizens share. The passion, the drive, and the freedom. I guess that old saying is true, the more things change the more they stay the same.

## Apple Time!

(February 2010)

*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.*

*An Apple a Day Will Keep the Doctor Away – We have heard that all our lives, and I have often wondered where that saying came from so I went searching on the internet. Sure enough, I found it. According to "Phrase Finder" the original phrase was "Eat an Apple Upon Going to Bed, and You'll Keep the Doctor From Earning His Bread," originated in Wales in February, 1866. In 1913 it was changed to the version we know today.*

I can remember my grandpa would always buy a couple of lugs

of apples from the fruit peddler in the fall every year. They would then store most of them in the fruit cellar, but leave a large supply in the house. Applesauce, apple pies – both baked and fried – apple butter, and especially peeling and slicing or scraping them by the fire in the living room before going to bed.

Do you serve the same side dishes every time you serve a certain meat dish? My mom always served creamed peas and carrots and "broasted" potatoes with meat loaf; canned spinach with fish; and with pork – either a roast or chops – there was always applesauce.

I've told you I don't like to make pie crust. I like apple pie if someone else cooks it – especially my nephew Adam. If I have apples to cook, I will make an Apple Crisp.

### APPLE CRISP

Preheat oven to 375

#### Filling:

6 cups peeled and chopped tart apples



## Aunt Jean's Ranchos Recipes

by Jean Briner

(this will take about 2 ½ pounds)

Juice of ½ lemon  
3 T granulated sugar

#### Topping:

½ C Flour  
¼ C granulated sugar  
¼ C packed brown sugar  
½ tsp cinnamon  
½ tsp nutmeg  
1/8 tsp salt  
6 T butter, cut into pieces  
1/3 C old fashioned oatmeal

1/3 C chopped nuts (optional)  
Butter or spray an 8 inch square baking dish.

Put all the topping ingredients in bowl and mix with two forks (or your hands) until mixture resembles coarse meal. Set aside

while preparing the filling. Place prepared apples, lemon juice and sugar in large bowl and toss until apples are coated. Pour evenly into prepared baking dish. Spread the topping evenly over apples. Bake 30-40 minutes until top is golden brown and apples are done. Let sit about 30 minutes before serving.

### ADAM'S APPLE PIE

#### Pie Crust:

2 C flour  
1 ½ tsp salt  
2/3 C shortening  
½ C ice water

Mix together flour, salt and shortening with pastry cutter until like meal. Add water and mix into a ball. This will be a little moist, but when you put it onto floured board and flour before rolling, it should be perfect. Cut in half, and roll each piece to a circle just larger than the 9" pie plate.

#### Filling:

Please see **RECIPE** on P. 9

According to "Phrase Finder" the original phrase was "Eat an Apple Upon Going to Bed, and You'll Keep the Doctor From Earning His Bread," originated in Wales in February, 1866. In 1913 it was changed to the version we know today.

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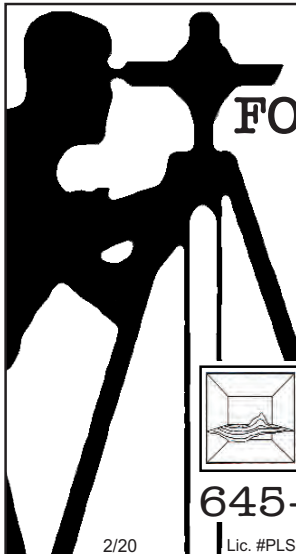
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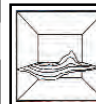
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RECIPE cont. from P. 8

- 3 to 3 1/2 pounds peeled and sliced tart cooking apples
- 2 T flour
- 2 tsp cinnamon
- 1 C Sugar
- 4-5 pats butter

Mix together apples, flour, cinnamon and sugar in large bowl. Pour into pie plate on top of bottom crust. Add butter randomly on top of apples. Put top layer on and crimp edges to seal. Cut air vents in top (before putting on top of apples, you could be fancy and cut apple shapes in top crust)

Bake in preheated 350 oven for 1 hour.

Ollia Ridge gave me this recipe – sounds wonderful and you don't even have to peel and slice apples.

VONDA'S APPLE CAKE

Preheat oven to 350

Mix the following ingredients together:

- 2 C flour
- 2 C sugar
- 1 can apple pie filling
- 1/2 C oil
- 1 tsp salt
- 2 tsp cinnamon
- 2 tsp baking soda
- 2 eggs
- 1 1/2 C raisins
- 1 1/2 C

chopped walnuts

Pour into 9x13 pan and bake for about 45 minutes.

There is a website that gives "Nine Reasons Why an Apple a Day Really

*Apples contain Vitamin C; they help prevent heart disease; they are low in calories; they help lower bad cholesterol and increase good cholesterol; and they help prevent tooth decay.*

Does Keep the Doctor Away." Among the reasons are: Apples contain Vitamin C; they help prevent heart disease; they are low in calories; they help lower bad cholesterol and increase good cholesterol; and they help prevent tooth decay. So keep eating those apples. You have lots of choices: yellow, green and all shades of red and all the way from tart to sweet.

Before I close this article, I want to put on a different hat. I want to talk to the residents of the Ranchos (this includes the Bonadelle and Rolling Hills areas) about the Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce. As you have no

doubt heard by now, the annual Crab Feed is coming up on March 6. It is the one big annual fundraiser for the Chamber. You can purchase a ticket or a book of tickets from any member of the Chamber and for \$35 (now \$65 -- Editor) you get all the salad, pasta and crab you can eat at one sitting. PLUS, you get to see old friends and meet new ones. Oh, there's one other thing: YOU GET TO HELP THE CHAMBER! Trust me, it is money well spent.

While I'm on the subject of the Chamber, I want to let you know that the Chamber could use your help. With the Crab Feed just a couple of weeks away there is a list of "chores" that need volunteers to fill. Just call Virginia or Ollia at 645-4001 and ask how you can help. In addition to the chores, the Chamber also needs items for the two auctions.






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**We All Do It**

Sometimes when I'm out and about I have random thoughts like, "Everyone in this store made a choice about what they were going to wear today." For some, it was a painstaking decision due to an abundance of options or the events of the day. For others, the choice was based on what was clean or on top of the pile. I admit sometimes thinking, "Hmm, that was an interesting choice." It strikes me how, as different as we all are, there are things we all do. We have many commonalities when it comes to daily living.

Today's tips focus on four things we all do, and ways to streamline them. Similar to the diversity in people, there are many methods of organizing, so please don't consider any of these the one right way. If your method is working for you, don't fix what's not broken. If your peace and productivity could be enhanced by a little organization, consider implementing one or more of these tips.

**Getting Dressed** — If you're scrambling to get out the door and choosing what to wear is slowing you down, try categorizing your clothes. Place whatever is off-season to the far side of the closet or containerize them on a shelf or under the bed. Divide the in-season clothes into work, play and special occasion sections. Remove any that are not your current size. You will notice a big difference when you no longer need to sift through multiple seasons and sizes, and have all your work items together and easily accessible. If you're retired, it's time to clear out the career clothes and donate them to someone who needs them. You'll love the extra space it affords your closet.

**Processing Mail** — Before your paper pile gets shoved into a drawer the next time company comes, create some homes and routines for the mail

and other papers. Think vertical is visible, and horizontal is hidden, since you really can't see anything but the top in a paper pile. Place a wall-mount or table-top file holder in the hub of your home. Create folders for Action Items, Bills to Pay, Events, etc. Daily sort the incoming mail and papers into your folders and immediately put the recyclables into a nearby receptacle. This will keep your flat surfaces clear and allow you to easily find your papers when you need them. No more late fees due to lost bills.

**Laundry** — Whether you're a "do a load a day," person, or one that likes to do a week's worth on one day, the challenge is to get the clean laundry to its home. If its default home is a pile on the bed, or the couch, or worse yet gets moved to the floor, it's a constant visual of more work yet to be done. This can be more draining than actually taking care of it. As the clothes come out of the dryer, place them on a large flat surface, like the bed, where you can immediately sort it into categories — shirts, pants, undies, towels, etc. Create sub-categories as needed for various family members. Now you're all set to hang or fold and put it away. You can also easily distribute the categories to family members for the final step. Even if you're doing multiple loads, complete the process with each load as it comes out of the dryer. It's much less overwhelming than dealing with a mountain of clean laundry.

**In 'n Out** — We all have stuff that comes and goes with us. Finding your keys, purse or wallet can be a stressful chore when you're trying to head out. Attach some decorative hooks to the wall near the door for keys, purses and backpacks. Designate a nearby drawer or tray for wallets and pocket contents. Place a decorative basket by the door for the reusable grocery bags, library books, dry cleaning and other items that need to go out with you.

Essential to your success with any of these tips is using the systems routinely. None of us do it perfectly, but as Joanna Weaver says, "Consistency doesn't mean perfection; it simply means not giving up."

Contact *Organized by Choice* (because things don't always fall into place) at P.O. Box 26152, Fresno, CA 93729, call 559-871-3314 or email [info@organizedbychoice.com](mailto:info@organizedbychoice.com). You can also pay a visit online to [www.organizedbychoice.com](http://www.organizedbychoice.com).

**2020**

**Great Family Events!**

- April 4 \_\_\_\_\_ Spring Festival 9am-2pm
- April 12 \_\_\_\_\_ "Sonrise" Service 7am and Pancake Breakfast
- May 10 \_\_\_\_\_ Mother's Day Celebration
- June 8-12 \_\_\_\_\_ Vacation Bible School
- June 21 \_\_\_\_\_ Father's Day Celebration
- July 4 \_\_\_\_\_ Independence Day Fireworks
- July 6-11 \_\_\_\_\_ Centrifuge Youth Camp
- September 25-27 \_\_\_\_\_ Women's Retreat
- October 24 \_\_\_\_\_ Harvest Festival 11am-2pm
- Nov. 8 \_\_\_\_\_ Veteran's being Recognized
- Nov. 16-23 \_\_\_\_\_ Operation Christmas Child Shoebox Collection week
- Nov. 14 \_\_\_\_\_ Thanksgiving Dinner 4:30pm
- December 7-8 \_\_\_\_\_ Juvenile Hall Meal Serving 5:30pm
- Dec. 16 \_\_\_\_\_ Christmas Party 6:30pm
- Dec. 24 \_\_\_\_\_ Candlelight Service 6:30pm

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- Men's Breakfast - 1st Saturday of every month at 9am

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By Wyatt Morgan

**4H Favorite  
Foods Day**

On Jan. 18, Sierra Shadows 4H competed in Madera County's Favorite Foods Day at Minarets High School. It was so exciting to see so many different kinds of food, all made by kids. There were many different categories you could enter, like candies, appetizers, international foods and place settings, just to name a few. Contestants had to create all of the foods and had to display it at the contest all on their own. They needed to have a recipe card also.

Our 4H club was well represented and won many awards. Everyone had a great time and maybe even made some new friends. The members who participated were: Hunter Williams-Smith, Griffin Williams-Smith, Jacob Garzon, R.J. Scroggins, Wyatt Morgan, McKenna Carr, Sienna Garcia, Aubrey Rocca, Kate Hauschel, Colie Tickle, Lucy Lee, Micah Lee and Delaney Rocca.



**Powerful Tools For Caregivers**

Powerful Tools For Caregivers is to help family caregivers take care of themselves while caring for an older relative or friend. You will benefit from this class whether you are helping a parent, spouse, friend, someone who lives at home, in a nursing home, or across the country.

The program is a six-week series that meets for two hours each week beginning March 3, 2020 then again on March 10, March 17, March 24, April 7 and April 14. The time for all of the sessions will be from

2 – 4 p.m.

The program will be held at 5363 N. Fresno Street in Fresno.

Registration is required and space is limited. To register, please contact Valley Caregiver Resource Center at 559-224-9154 or 800-541-8614. You must sign up one-week prior to the class start date and if you're interested in finding out about respite care in your area.

This class is not for professionals, providers, volunteers or for patients.



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Proceeds go to the Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce. The Annual Crab Feed always sells out so get your tickets early! You can get your tickets at the Chamber office, the Ranchos Independent, Ranchos Pizza Factory or the Ranchos Café.



2/20

## Call the Chamber for more information. 645-4001

### Be a Crab Feed Sponsor

Is your business going to the Crab Feed? For \$700 (*\$600 if bought by Feb. 21*) you get a table for 10, get to put your company banner up at the event, have your name listed at every table, have your table introduced at the event and be listed in the Ranchos Independent. Call 645-4001.

The Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce would love to see you at our next meeting, always the second Wednesday of the month. Join us on March 11 at 6:30 p.m. at 37167 Ave. 12, Suite 5C. Come give your input on the future of the Ranchos. Call us at 645-4001.

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## The Bookshelf

# New Library Getting Back in Groove

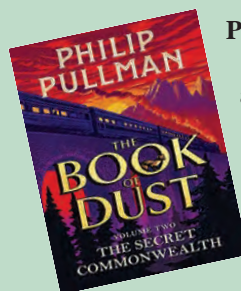
By Jerrica Edmundson

We have fully moved into the new branch location of the Madera Ranchos Library and we are finally getting back into the swing of daily function. As a friendly reminder, donations are only to be brought to the library during business hours; please do not leave book donations or other items at the front door when we are not present. This creates a hazard for the walkways. We are accepting donations of books in good condition but do ask that encyclopedia sets and the like be kept from donation as they are simply recycled and cannot be used.

We've got a great lineup for the Summer Reading Program this year, and that should be starting on June 25. I'm still finalizing some of the performers and want to ensure the best program possible for everyone, so I will make an official post on our Facebook page as soon as I have it wrapped up. As usual, this is a program put on by the Friends of the Ranchos Library for the benefit of our community and I love seeing the support and participation out here. It will be great to have it held in the new location so we can truly "break it in" and get the library up to snuff as a great location for community events.

Our meeting room is available for community usage, with details surrounding the request process available on demand at the circulation desk. We have loved hosting Brett Frazier's Coffee and Conversation and it seems that partnership will be going strong for the future.

**Jerrica's Bookshelf:** *The Secret Commonwealth* by Phillip Pullman.



I've been eagerly waiting for the time to read this book and am so glad I finally get to. This book released the week I was in London and I missed out by just a few hours being able to see Pullman speak regarding the book, which was very depressing (although the trip was still amazing.)

This book takes place about eight years after the events that ended the original *Golden Compass* trilogy from my childhood. A magical world where every person has a daemon attached to them at birth that takes the form of an animal dependent on their temperament. Filled with intrigue and action while following a girl and her best friend on a trip to the Arctic to follow the girl's mother, the original trilogy took me on a trip I will never forget, and this follow-up is doing just as amazing a job. This is technically a sequel to his new *Book of Dust* series, but this trilogy is completely dependent on the original, so if you want to jump into this world I do recommend starting with *The Golden Compass*.

*The Secret Commonwealth* deals with relationships between people and their daemons, and the importance of imagination in going through daily life. I love these stories and their complexity; they are such a great escape from reality and offer so much more than face value.

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- A squirt of shaving cream can help release latex paint specks on your hands from using a roller brush.
- Baked apples (or stuffed peppers) will stay perfectly upright if you set them into the wells of a muffin tin.
- Make your own bath oil by mixing a couple of drops of your favorite perfume with a bit of

- baby oil. Just rub on post-bath or add to your bathwater.
- "Recently I cooked a big batch of broccoli in the afternoon. The house had that cabbage smell. I don't like air fresheners because the strong smell gives me a headache. My neighbor told me to boil a couple of cups of vinegar and let it simmer

for 10 minutes. At first, the vinegar smell replaced the cabbage smell, but then it totally disappeared and all the smells were gone too." -- E.Y. in Pennsylvania.  
Send your tips to *Now Here's a Tip*, 628 Virginia Drive, Orlando, FL 32803.

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Senior Report

# Garden Festival, St. Patrick's Day

By Margaret Tynan

Get out your calendar and mark this down: The Ranchos/Hills Seniors Spring Home and Garden Festival is almost here. It will be held Saturday, April 4 from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Coffee and pastries will be available in the morning and BBQ hamburgers and hotdogs will be available at lunch time. The event is a great way to enjoy the beginning of spring. There will be many plants to choose from to beautify your gardens and yards. Demonstrations on various planting topics will be given by Master Gardeners. They will be on hand to answer your questions and give you planting and landscaping tips. Local crafters and community businesses will feature their wares and/or services. We still have vendor space available. If you or anyone you know would like to participate, be sure to register early as spaces are limited. The cost of a 12' x 18' space is \$30. You may request a registration form by calling or faxing Ranchos/Hills Senior Center at 559-645-4864, or

Fax 559-645-4830), or Email: rhse-niors@att.net, or by coming into the Center at 37330 Berkshire Dr. The center is open 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. If you have any questions, please contact Phyllis at the Center.

Beginning March 15, Easter Baskets will be available again this year at the Center and at the Home and Garden Festival. In addition to baskets for children, there will be baskets with a pet theme and baskets suitable for adults. You may also order a custom basket. Contact Carol Wood at the Center to order yours.

Tuesday, March 17 is St. Patrick's Day. Join us at the Center that evening at 6 p.m. for a traditional Corn Beef and Cabbage dinner. The cost is \$15 per person. Sign up at the Center. I thought it might be interesting to take a look at the history of St. Patrick's Day in America. An article by Christopher Klein online at history.com was very informative. St. Patrick's Day has been a solemn religious feast day in Ireland since 1631, with morning church services fol-

lowed by modest afternoon feasts. According to Klein, "There were no parades and certainly no emerald-tinted food products, particularly since blue, not green, was the traditional color associated with Ireland's patron saint prior to the 1798 Irish Rebellion." The wearing of the green, drinking green beer or Guinness, Irish parades, etc. were made in America, not imported from Ireland. Even the traditional corn beef and cabbage meal is also an American innovation. "While ham and cabbage were eaten in Ireland, corned beef proved a cheaper substitute for impoverished [Irish] immigrants ... living in the slums of lower Manhattan ..." Well, we are not living in lower Manhattan, but we can be Irish for the day. So, come and join us for a delicious "traditional" meal. Wear green, bring your table setting and appetite. See you there. Note: There will not be a General Meeting the afternoon of Tuesday, March 17. In-

stead, there will be a brief meeting that evening before the corn beef and cabbage dinner.

Here is another date for your calendar: Everyone had such a good time at the last 500 Piece Puzzle Competition we're having another one on Sunday, March 22 from 2 to 5 p.m. First-time puzzlers, seasoned puzzle fanatics and everyone in-between are welcome to join in this fun event. Teams will be formed randomly the day of the event. Light refreshments will be provided. Sign up at the Center ASAP, as seating is limited. A \$5 donation to participate will be appreciated.

Don't forget the monthly Bake, Boutique, Garden and Treasure House Sale on Saturday, March 7 from 8 a.m. to noon. We hope to see you at one or all of these events.

Thought for March: "I'm a great believer in luck, and I find the harder I work, the more luck I have." — Thomas Jefferson

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**Say you saw it in the Ranchos Independent**

*Kiwanis Korner*

## Movers, Shakers Speak to Kiwanis

By Nancy Wayne

*"Kiwanis International is a global organization of volunteers dedicated to changing the world one child, one community at a time."*

In the month of January, Madera Rancho Kiwanis has had speakers from Golden Valley School District come present the goals and program in the District. Lacey Menses from the District office spoke about the plans for expansions and additions at individual sites and the new Riverstone development. Rancho Middle School's principal and assistant principal both spoke to the Kiwanis group on different nights.



*Ranchos Kiwanis President Richard Wayne, left, greets Ranchos Middle School Principal Chris Imperatrice for a speaking engagement at a recent Ranchos Kiwanis meeting.*

Principal Chris Imperatrice talked about how important positive morale and self-esteem are to the junior high age group. Kelly Moore's leadership class supports building positive students morale. The class put up positive messages and posters around the school throughout the year. He explained that there are 11 electives offered on the schedule and school-wide assemblies for team building to help with the atmosphere on campus. Every day during lunch on the "corral" (patio), music is played along with ping pong, table board games and competitive games on the field.

Rebecca Hart, assistant principal, spoke about the progressive learning program "CoLab" started this year. This philosophy involves multiple teachers and Hart who monitor students' learning outcomes and checks data after exams. Teachers and administration follow through with students to help keep them on academic track throughout the school year. Hart stated that data shows test results have been raising. She stressed when a student feels successful in his or her academics, he or she will feel more positive about his or her personal life, and future high school academics.

On Friday, Jan. 31 at the Ranchos Middle School flag ceremony on the corral, Kiwanis members Verlaine, Maria, John, Nancy and Richard attended the dedication of a water station for the school. Kiwanis purchased the station and the District installed it in the cafeteria. Two students tasted the water from the school's taps and compared it with the new filtered water to be sure it tasted better. The station offers filtered water and helps with the environment by bringing their own water bottles to refill. There is a counter on the station letting everyone know how many plastic bottles have been eliminated. Students can fill up their bottles during break and at lunch.

Kiwanis Key Club, from Liberty High School, came to a Kiwanis meeting and President, Gursirat Kaur and her officers did a "club take over," which means she ran the agenda of the Rancho Kiwanis general meeting. She did a great job and the girls earned their club extra money that was collected as "fines" at the Rancho Kiwanis club meeting.

Rancho Kiwanis schedule guest speakers throughout the month. On Feb. 27, Cassandra Melching from the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution District will be coming by, bringing very informative and interesting information about our air. Come hear what our speakers have to say Thursday nights at 6:30 p.m. at the Pizza Factory conference room on Avenue 12.

Remember, you are always welcome to join us at one of our meetings. Come down any Thursday, except the first one of the month, to the Pizza Factory Banquet Room at 37184 Ave. 12 at 6:15 p.m. You will enjoy the camaraderie and fun, and also be a part of making a difference in our community.



## National Recognition

Hello, 93636

As I sit here Saturday afternoon writing this article, it was just hours ago I was in a local high school automotive training facility with six other technicians and four of our local high school Career and Technical Education (CTE) instructors.

The instructors were receiving PicoScope automotive diagnostic training. PicoScope is computer software that acquires real-time signals from an automotive engine for Pico Technology oscilloscopes, which then view and analyze those signals for problems. The workshop began with an hour-long instructional session from a curriculum developed by one of our "Pico Club" members. We then separated into four individual teams for 2 1/2 hours of live-vehicle, hands-on training. Each instructor was paired with a Pico Club technician guiding them as they connected the technology, set up all the diagnostic tests, pushed all the buttons and analyzed the waveforms they collected. We wanted to ensure each instructor was knowledgeable, capable and completely understood the tasks and diagnostic they were teaching.

In attendance were instructors from Coalinga High, Clovis High, Duncan Polytechnical High and Central High School of Fresno. Potentially we will be partnering with about nine local high schools. Sorry to say, there are no Madera County high school CTE automotive programs of which I'm aware.

This all began in April of 2018 when I received a letter of resignation from my seven-year lead technician. Scott was moving on to become an automotive instructor for Fresno City College. Although I knew his departure would be challenging, I also knew in the long-term Scott training future automotive technicians would be very beneficial for me and our local automotive repair industry.

As it turned out, challenging was a gross underestimate for what I was about to face. After six months and thousands of dollars with employment-related search engine companies, I didn't receive a single application from a technician with the skill sets I needed. It was very

obvious to me there was a critical shortage of local, qualified automotive technicians.

Several other local NAPA AutoCare Center owners and I decided to get involved. In late 2018, we attended the very first of our local high school career fairs. Three months later, the Central California Pico Club was formed. For the past 14 months we have been meeting the first Saturday of every month for the purposes of advancing our PicoScope understanding and to support each other with difficult-to-diagnosis vehicles. New school technology

can be brutal and the learning curve steep but with the support of each other it's much more manageable.

With our Pico Club model, each member technician is a teacher. During each month's workshop, technicians present successful case studies of difficult diagnostics from the previous month. We all share waveforms, tactics, techniques and strategies. After the presentations we connect our PicoScope technology to vehicles and practice what we've learned. At these workshops, CTE automotive instructors are standing shoulder to shoulder with our technicians and learning what we learn.

I would like to thank NAPA, Carquest,

O'Reilly and Factor Motor Parts for all their support. These companies have opened their training sessions to our CTE instructors free of charge. Now instructors receive the same current ongoing training and instruction we receive without cost.

Several months ago, the local CTE instructors organized and asked the Central California Pico Club to become their industry advisor. We said YES! This union is not a traditional industry advisory relationship. We are partnering with instructors to create a new, modern, advanced high school automotive diagnostic instructional curriculum.

It is not our intent to replace the current curriculum. Our intent is to create a unified instructional supplement to their curriculum. We are developing a curriculum of 20-30 common skill sets and tasks designed to make

students very desirable and employable, ready for our local automotive repair industry. At the heart of this supplement is PicoScope technology. Today's bi-monthly workshop was our first trial run. It was very successful and we are very encouraged.

Since January 2020, seven of our NAPA AutoCare Center Pico Club members have been hosting Fresno Duncan Polytechnical High School students in our shops two days per week.

The students work two hours per day alongside our technicians and receive real life automotive shop experience and training. We train students with the PicoScope as much as possible, so they take it back with them to use during school classroom and shop instruction. Late last year our Central California Pico Club /Educator model began receiving attention from several national automotive trade magazines and a national automotive industry radio program.

Since October we have been interviewed twice by the "Remarkable Results" radio program, once by Ratchet & Wrench magazine and once by NAPA's "Insite" magazine. The reason I decided to write today's article is because Ratchet & Wrench magazine announced today's Central California Pico Club /Educators workshop nationally in yesterday's daily issue. WOW! Ratchet & Wrench thought today's workshop was national newsworthy. What a pleasant surprise. Thank You Addy for your support.

OK Guys and Gals, that's all for this one. As always, I'm looking for interesting, current and informative automotive industry topics to write about. If you have any suggestions, recommendations, topics and specific or general questions about a vehicle, I can be reached at complete\_car\_care@hotmail.com or text 559-907-7661.

God Bless America and God Bless 93636 Warren Parr, ASE Master, Advanced Level and Hybrid Certified Technician. An ASE/NAPA two-time California Technician of the Year.

*The reason I decided to write today's article is because Ratchet & Wrench magazine announced today's Central California Pico Club /Educators workshop nationally in yesterday's daily issue. WOW!*

## LETTERS cont. from P. 4

mart after dark without my husband, I decided to address this infraction in this fashion – vowing to discuss this incident with the Manager of Walmart on my next visit.

There is a "No Parking Unless Using the Charging Station" sign clearly posted which I suspect this less-than-honorable driver saw. Perhaps the sign should have the C.S. Lewis Quote: "Integrity is doing the right thing even when no one is watching."

Claudia Zonsius  
Madera Ranchos

Dear Editor:

I immigrated from Mexico to build a better life in a free democratic country. I started out as an agricultural worker and now I am a councilmember. I'm so grateful and honored to be an American. My three children were valedictorians. I want to make sure they have the opportunity to live the American Dream by getting college educations, finding love and stable work. One day

I, and my wonderful wife, hope they'll marry and raise their children in the California I've come to love.

I don't want to imagine a world where protecting your children means trying to keep them from exposure to deadly epidemics, famine, natural disasters and poverty, but that is a world we all may have to face unless we take serious action against climate change. We must keep fossil fuels in the ground, so that all our children will have a future to look forward to.

Protecting the health of Californians requires tackling climate change. First, we must address the main driver of the climate crisis: the production and burning of fossil fuels which puts lives and livelihoods at unnecessary risk. That's why I stand with over 300 Elected Officials to Protect California who are calling on Governor Newsom to end permits for new oil and gas wells, implement a 2,500-foot public health drilling setback around all fossil fuel production sites and commit the state to 100-percent clean, renewable energy now.

The San Joaquin Valley has been called the food basket of the world for its produce diversity, yet the valley is also the state's pri-

mary oil production region.

Droughts have been getting worse because climate change alters seasonal patterns, making hot days hotter and increasing the chances of devastating fires. Last year, the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District issued a Valley wide health alert due to poor air quality caused by wildfire smoke. Still, agricultural workers continued to toil in the fields breathing in the dirty air held in place because of the Valley's configuration which makes the pollution stick around.

In 2016, over 60,000 individuals in the San Joaquin Valley's nine counties experienced food insecurity, largely due to the 2011 to 2017 drought. Groundwater withdrawals by industrial farming operations decreased the water table and increased the concentration of nitrates and arsenic in the water. Arsenic exposure has been linked to diabetes and cancer. Nearly 4,000 California households in the agricultural, majority Hispanic southern San Joaquin Valley, experienced failing water supplies from January 2014 to August 2016. That's right, that's

Please see **LETTERS** on P. 21

Click on "Local News" at



# SEMUCU speaks

## About our domestic well water levels

By Igal Treibatch

**The depletion problem** – We all know of someone who lost their domestic well due to depleting ground water in our community’s aquifer. Using an ordinary watering hose to connect to a neighbor became a regular theme. Things had to be changed and something had to be done quickly. Conservation, rain, importing of surface water and recharging are the basic, and only realistic, options for refilling the aquifer and stop the depletion, reverse the loss and achieve sustainability.

Our aquifer’s water levels change within a single season on a regular basis. Water use during the summer heat lowers the water table while winter’s rains and snow melt replenishes it. When drought conditions are present along with potential overuse, the water level does not recover as quickly or at all, and the loss shows as more permanent lower water elevations.

**The recharge project** – Four years ago at SEMCU, the idea of one proven method, using “dry Wells” (injection wells), to recharge the aquifer with rainwater and surface water when available became a goal. Solving the technical part was not difficult, but the financial burden needed to be overcome. After negotiating for materials and drilling costs, we were able to price each

well at about \$3,000. To raise funds for the project, we reached out to farmers and businesses who operate around our area and asked to help us begin our process. We had very good response and in the past four years SEMCU has installed 146 such injection wells throughout Southeast Madera at a total cost of more than \$430,000, all free of charge to homeowners.

**The results** – It was difficult to see immediate results of the recharge project, and thanks to the state Department of Water & Resources (DWR), keeping historical records which are available to the public helped to analyze conditions and try to make sense of them. DWR drilled monitoring wells and also has additional available information from other monitoring wells in Southeast Madera as part of their observation practice and they record the changing water levels on their website at [gis.water.ca.gov/app/gicima](http://gis.water.ca.gov/app/gicima). To better understand the water levels, you must remember that the elevation is related to sea level at zero. Southeast Madera contour levels are at approximately 300 feet above sea level. Water level recordings should be looked at and compared based on the seasons. What jumped out at us when we looked at the records was fall 2015 and fall 2018. The water levels in these two years are identical. They were at 25 feet above sea level indicating no loss of water level.

It is early in the process, but we can assume that something is slowing the water level loss in our aquifer. We need a few more years of measuring to be able to say with confidence that the slowdown of water loss is actually sustain-


able. We have submitted a \$1 million grant request from DWR to install more such wells. If granted, we will be on our way to a more sustainable future.

SEMUCU is a nonprofit entity run by your friends and neighbors working for the betterment and sustainable future of our community. Although our most pressing issues today relate to water, we also are working on school safety and education, a community center and parks, traffic and road safety as well as obtaining available grants to help our community have a comfortable and sustainable future. A place we can be proud to raise our kids and families.

SEMUCU meets only once per month on the third Monday of every month at 6 p.m. at the Pizza Factory on Avenue 12 for approximately one hour. Our elections and annual meeting are on March 16 at 6 p.m. Come and help us make a difference and improve our community with new ideas and suggestions for needed projects.

For the community, by the community.

*Southeast Madera County United (SEMUCU) is a non-profit benefit organization promoting local interests and topics in the SEMCU area. Call 559-363-9095 for information or email SEMCU at [info@semcu.org](mailto:info@semcu.org).*



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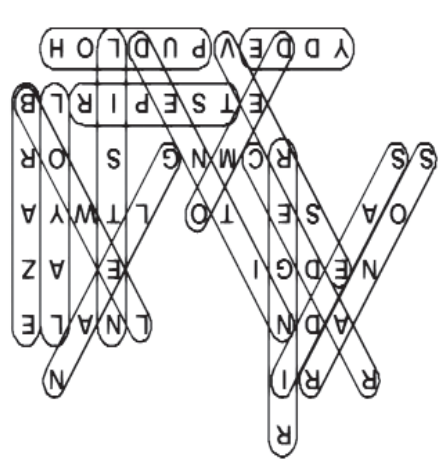
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## GO FIGURE!

by Linda Thistle

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

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## SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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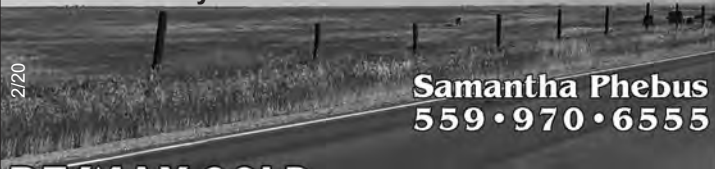


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By Betty Van Valkenburg

### NEWS FLASH!

Nothing is perfect. Nothing, and no one.

Only one human being has ever been perfect, and He walked the earth some 2,000 years ago. Before and since then, not one single person – zero, nada, zilch – has come close to perfection. Far from it. Not one company, private institution or organization has attained perfection. Not even close. Not one government, including this greatest nation on earth, has been or ever will be perfect.

This is not to argue against *striving* to be great. Quite the contrary. It is the act of striving – working hard, surviving hardships, never giving up, pushing against all odds, and fighting for what is right – that provides any hope of making people, groups or institutions the best, although inevitably flawed, that they can be.

For this discussion, let's stick to the imperfect government part. Through history, governments of some sort or another have promised utopia – a perfection that can never be achieved by any "ism" devised by human beings. And that is the crux of the matter. People of every color, race, creed, gender, age, nationality, intelligence (or lack thereof) are flawed. So, it follows that any government or institution devised by fallible human beings is similarly flawed. Even individuals with the best intentions, educations and motives cannot achieve a form of government that is anywhere near the elusive goal of perfection. And those who think they can are the most dangerous to freedom and individual happiness.

Although some folks might have good intentions, *none* is infallible; and some are – or have been and will be – just plain scoundrels motivated by their own egos, God complexes, lust for power or know-it-all-ism.

Of course, everyone realizes this. It isn't some surprising revelation. So why, especially with centuries of history as a background, do we fall for the promise of a perfect society by flawed politicians – "if only"? *If only* they

passed more laws to control the helpless populous. *If only* they spent more of our money to give us what only they know we need. *If only* we would let the politicians think for us and provide for us and plan our lives. *If only* we would elect Bernie Sanders and get everything for free. *If only* socialist or communist claims were true, we would have a paradise, right?

But wait, what about the uniqueness of each individual? How can one old curmudgeon or one group of elites decide what makes 350 million unique individuals happy? How can Bernie Sanders or Elizabeth Warren or their ilk spoon feed us what they think is good for us? How can they deem that health care is a "right" or child-care is a "right," when a right is not the ability to demand that others provide something for us, but the ability to provide for ourselves without undue government interference?

True socialism has led to misery in every instance. Communism, its big brother, has proven to be devastatingly worse for humanity. So, what is the best form of government offering the best outcome for its citizens?

The American experiment is not perfect, but it is the best yet devised for the greatest prosperity and freedom of its citizens. It is the first to adopt a constitution to protect the citizens from government excesses and form a government whose purpose is to guarantee the rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness – *not provide* happiness, because flawed politicians cannot know what is in every heart or soul – but leave us free to *pursue* happiness as each of us decides, without violating the rights of others.

Socialist, communist and fascist dictatorships have come and gone, leaving devastation in their wakes. Still others remain, and their people yearn for freedom and flee for other countries, notably the United States of America. Yet we are on the brink of a major decision. Rather than striving to make our country the best it can be, some want to transform it to something intolerable. They decry this country's imperfections while apologizing for countries that are miserable failures – Such as Bernie Sanders' praise of Fidel Castro and the Cuban government.

Will we retain our messy and less-than-perfect form of constitutional government which has proven to be a beacon of freedom or succumb to the false promise of "if only" and loss of liberty?

Please vote wisely.

Visit the Central Valley Tea Party website at [www.teapartypatriots.org](http://www.teapartypatriots.org) for more information.

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## Just Like Cats &amp; Dogs

by Dave T. Phipps

**LETTERS** cont. from P. 16

nearly two years. Two-thirds of the water shortages in the San Joaquin Valley's Tulare County were in very low-income communities where many families had to rely on bottled water or emergency water tanks.

Because of climate change, Californians face increasing health problems such as heat-related issues, asthma, cancer, heart troubles, food and water contamination, and mental health challenges. These threats will only increase as long as fossil fuel corporations and our transportation systems continue to pump climate-changing pollution into the air.

While enjoying huge tax incentives, this dangerous industry poisons communities. More than 12,000 lives are lost annually due to fossil fuel production in our state, according to a Stanford University study.

It's time for Sacramento to put people first, not corporations. Our farming practices need to change too by using less chemicals and applying more organic components to help our soil retain water and nutrients.

In the Central Valley we have places where the soil is sinking because of aquifer depletion. Too many farmers have been pumping our underground water for water intensive crops. That's why the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act goals are so important to help disadvantaged communities like mine. But we still don't have the enough water storage capacity for when the rains come. The good news is that we have a plan to put in a mile-long pipe that would run from the canal to the water recharge basin, where water is stored, so that the water will be replenished. However, a neighboring water agency is trying to take our water using a legal loophole. If they succeed, they'll undermine water programs that guarantee everyone in our region has access to safe, clean water. Without clean water people will get sick. Water is a human right.

As public servants we must protect the environment for all our citizens. I'm concerned that greed blinds some people to the realities of climate change. Instead of conserving our planet, they are destroying and depleting the earth's resources to support luxurious lifestyles. But there isn't anywhere on earth where the effects of climate change won't be felt. We're all part of our human family.

When you reduce yourself just to your primary family you only help a few people, but when you understand that every human is part of your family, you can help the whole world.

Felipe Perez, General Manager of Biola Community Services District and Firebaugh Councilmember

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**ARIES** (March 21 to April 19) Your natural Arian leadership qualities make you the person others will follow in tackling that important project. But don't get so involved in the work that you neglect your personal life.

**TAURUS** (April 20 to May 20) Aspects favor sorting through your possessions, both at work and at home, to start giving away what you don't use, don't need or don't like. Relax later with someone special.

**GEMINI** (May 21 to June 20) The issues are not quite as clear as they should be. That's why you need to avoid getting involved in disputes between colleagues at work or between relatives or personal friends.

**CANCER** (June 21 to July 22) You'll get lots of support from others if you own up to your mistake quickly and include a full and honest explanation. Learn from this experience so that you don't repeat it.

**LEO** (July 23 to August 22) There might be some early confusion over a major move, whether it's at work or at home. But once you get a full breakdown of what it entails, it should be easier to deal with. Good luck.

**VIRGO** (August 23 to September 22) Creating order out of chaos, even in the most untidy spaces, should be no problem for organized Virgos. So go ahead and do it, and then accept praise from impressed colleagues.

**LIBRA** (September 23 to October 22) Whether it's for business purposes or just for leisure, a trip might be just what you need right now. You would benefit both from a change of scenery and from meeting new people.

**SCORPIO** (October 23 to November 21) While things generally go well this week, a romantic situation seems to have stalled. But you can restart it if you want to. Then again, maybe this is a chance to reassess the situation.

**SAGITTARIUS** (November 22 to December 21) A meeting that was promised quite a while back could finally happen. So be sure you're prepared with everything you'll need to make your case sound convincing and doable.

**CAPRICORN** (December 22 to January 19) A workplace blunder could create a problem down the line unless you deal with it right now to see how and why it happened. Don't be surprised at what you might learn.

**AQUARIUS** (January 20 to February 18) This is a good time to re-sort your priorities and see if adjustments are called for. Be honest with yourself as you decide what to keep, what to discard and what to change.

**PISCES** (February 19 to March 20) Letting yourself be bathed in the outpouring of love and support from those who care for you will help you get through a difficult period sooner rather than later. Good luck.

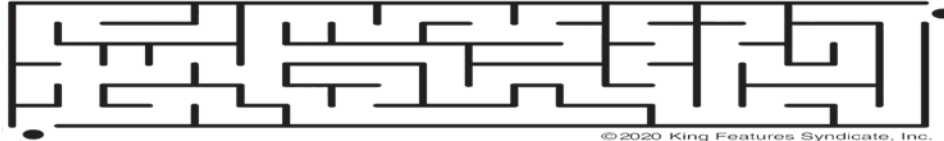
## Born this Week

*You have an uncanny gift for reaching out to all people  
and creating bridges of understanding among them.*

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# FUN PAGES

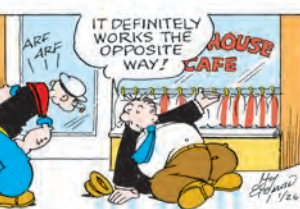
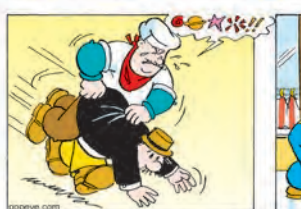
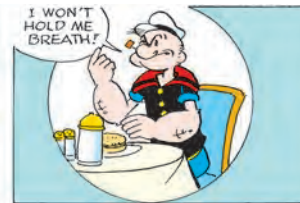
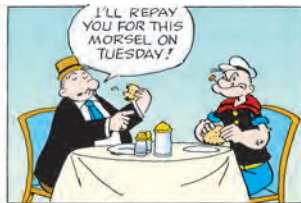
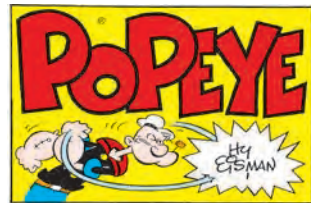
## Kids' Maze



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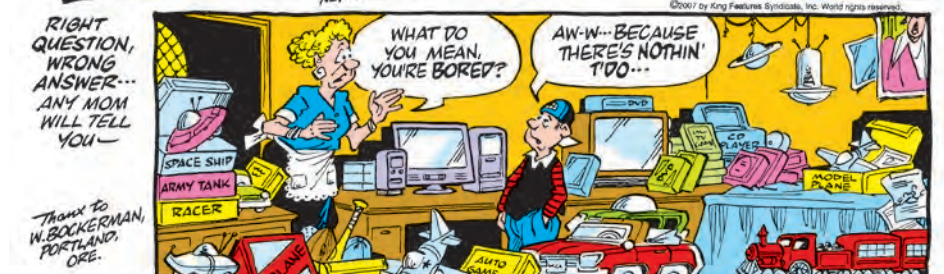
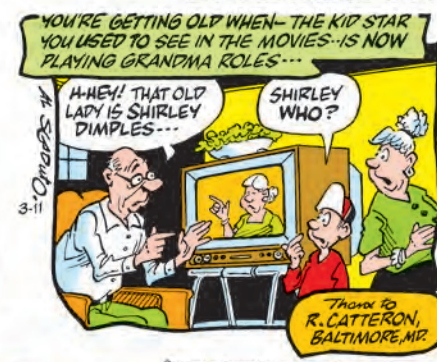
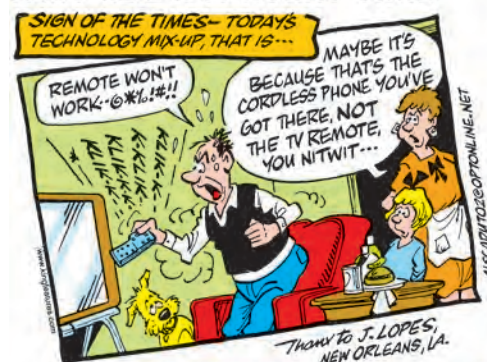
## TIGER

by BUD BLAKE



## THEY'LL DO IT EVERY TIME

BY AL SCADUTO

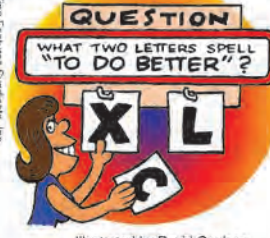


## Junior Whirl

by Charles Barry Townsend

### KNOW YOUR ALPHABET!

SEE IF you can answer the following questions by using just two letters from the alphabet.



### WHAT TWO LETTERS SPELL...

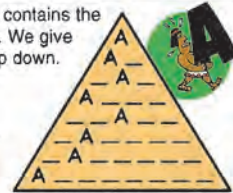
1. a winter condition?
2. a kind of pepper?
3. to rot away?
4. overindulgence?
5. a climbing plant?
6. a literary composition?
7. how a dieter feels?
8. aesthetic pretensions?
9. no matter which?
10. an English county?

HIDDEN in the above frame is a proverb. Find it by reading every other letter as you go around it clockwise. The trick is finding the right first letter.

FIND A CERTAIN 10-digit number: The first digit must be the same as the number of 0s in the entire number, the second digit must be the same as the number of 1s in the entire number, and so on through the 10th digit.

SAY "A"! As you go down the pyramid, each word contains the same letters as the word above it plus a new letter. We give you all of the A's. Here are some hints, from the top down.

- 1) Highest grade (given).
- 2) In or near.
- 3) A color.
- 4) To be opposed.
- 5) Big person.
- 6) Position of a scale.
- 7) Rodent-hunter's activity.
- 8) Getting dressed.



The words are: a, at, tan, ant, ant, gant, gant, rating, rating, sitting.

## Wishing Well

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

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

WORDS TYPED WITH ONLY THE MIDDLE AND INDEX FINGERS

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

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

- |            |           |         |         |
|------------|-----------|---------|---------|
| Beehive    | Cherub    | Hundred | Recent  |
| Butcher    | Defective | Indeed  | Thunder |
| Butter     | Endure    | Kitchen | Untrue  |
| Centrifuge | Fence     | Minimum |         |

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## TRIVIA TEST

By Fifi Rodriguez

1. LITERATURE: Which novel introduced the character of Lisbeth Salander?
2. MOVIES: What was the name of Bill Murray's character in the 1984 "Ghostbusters" film?
3. HISTORY: Roughly how many people migrated from drought-stricken Dust Bowl states in the United States in the 1930s?
4. ENTERTAINMENT: What was the title of the first arcade video game?
5. FAMOUS QUOTATIONS: Which American humorist once observed, "In the spring, I have counted 136 different kinds of weather inside of 24 hours"?
6. MUSIC: Which 1980s movie featured the theme song "Don't You (Forget About Me)" by Simple Minds?
7. TELEVISION: What was the name of Michael Knight's car on the series "Knight Rider"?
8. GEOGRAPHY: Which country lies between India and China?
9. PSYCHOLOGY: What fear is represented in the condition called "heliophobia"?
10. GENERAL KNOWLEDGE: What is the name of the pound sign on a keyboard?

### Answers

1. "The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo"
2. Dr. Peter Venkman
3. About 2.5 million
4. Pong
5. Mark Twain
6. "The Breakfast Club"
7. KITT (Knight Industries Two Thousand)
8. Nepal
9. Fear of the sun
10. Octothorpe

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Click on "Local News" at

### Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps



### R.F.D.

by Mike Marland



### Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas



### The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



### Intelligent Life

by David Reddick



### HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF

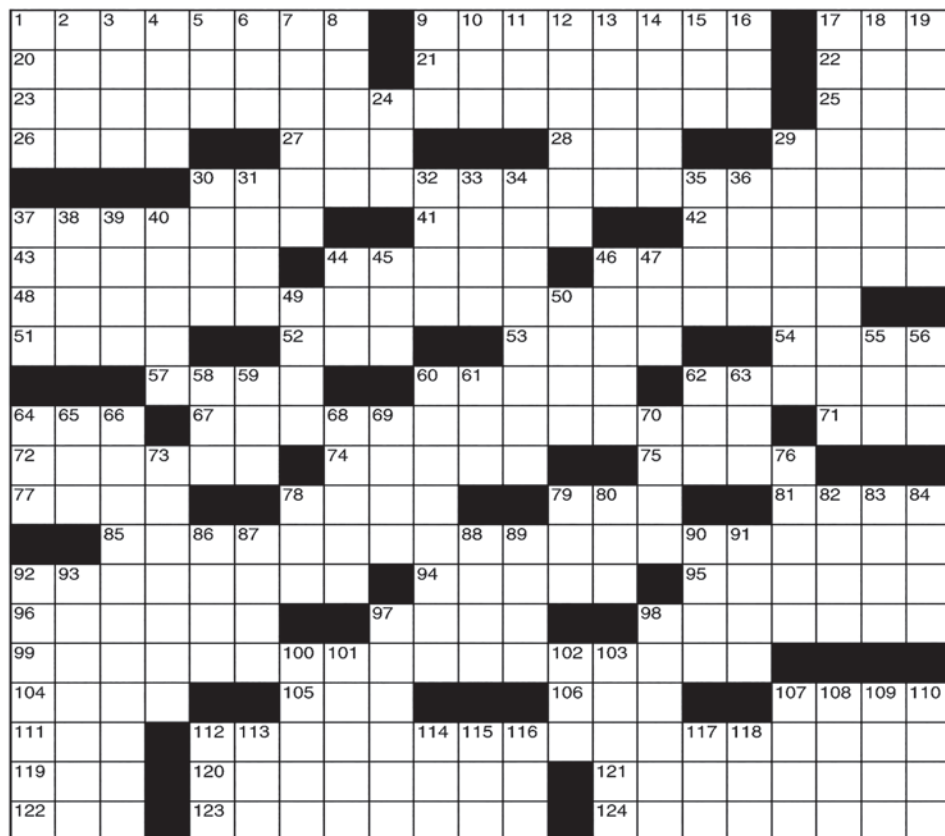
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Differences: 1. Apron is longer. 2. Earmuffs are removed. 3. Fence is shorter. 4. Door window is lower. 5. Footprint is missing. 6. Bow is added.

www.TheRanchos.com

## Super Crossword



- ACROSS**
- 1 While away the hours
  - 9 Amorphous, sunken-into seats
  - 17 Book divs.
  - 20 Adopts, as a belief
  - 21 Do a new layout of
  - 22 Marina del —, California
  - 23 Start of a riddle
  - 25 Musician Yoko
  - 26 Fixes a seam, say
  - 27 Drink served with scones
  - 28 Suffix with final or solo
  - 29 Heroic poetry
  - 30 Riddle, part 2
  - 37 7-Eleven drink
  - 41 Isn't on target
  - 42 Contract inker, e.g.
  - 43 "Stones for —" (1988 film)
  - 44 San —, California
  - 46 Most fake
  - 48 Riddle, part 3
  - 51 With 57-Across, descent before pulling a rip cord
  - 52 Chilean cheer
  - 53 Praise publicly
  - 54 Margarita glass liner
  - 57 See 51-Across
  - 60 1990s Philippine president
  - 62 Ad entreaty
  - 64 ET of TV
  - 67 Riddle, part 4
  - 71 "Rock and Roll, Hoochie —"
  - 72 Gel alternative
  - 74 Bow rub-on
  - 75 "— Cassius has a lean and hungry look": Julius Caesar
  - 77 — Sunday
  - 78 Let out
  - 79 Xenon, e.g.
  - 81 Fesses (up)
  - 85 Riddle, part 5
  - 92 Deliver news about
  - 94 Capacious
  - 95 One of Jupiter's moons
  - 96 Rare Italian violins
  - 97 Trial run
  - 98 Watched kids for cash
  - 99 End of the riddle
  - 104 Tip jar bills
  - 105 Mimicker
  - 106 "— There Was You"
  - 107 — ghanouj
  - 111 Poetry Out Loud org.
  - 112 Riddle's answer
  - 119 Wind up
  - 120 Tendency to stick together
  - 121 "Casino Royale" Bond girl player
  - 122 Tokyo "ta-ta"
  - 3 Shoot forth beam
  - 4 Male heirs
  - 5 "Tsk!"
  - 6 "Semi-" suffix
  - 7 Get together
  - 8 Road twists
  - 9 Male sib
  - 10 Always, to bards
  - 11 Astern
  - 12 Feature of a perfect ball game
  - 13 Audacious
  - 14 Just slightly
  - 15 Slender fish
  - 16 Hog home
  - 17 Certain liquid fuel
  - 18 High-tech map subjects
  - 19 Natalie Portman's childhood home on Long Island
  - 24 "Bali —"
  - 29 Most tense
  - 30 Twist
  - 31 Skin cream brand
  - 32 Ensnares
  - 33 Cookie giant
  - 34 Lead singer
  - 35 Beginning on
  - 36 Have supper
  - 37 Son of Willy Loman
  - 38 Skyscraper
  - 39 Many an app
  - 40 Anguish
  - 44 Actor Gibson
  - 45 Had supper
  - 46 Sainted pope
  - 47 FDR follower
  - 49 Hit the links
  - 50 Boxing punch
  - 55 London lav
  - 56 16 eighths
  - 58 Tummy "six-pack"
  - 59 Actor Marvin
  - 60 Interstate stop
  - 61 Pal, in Calais
  - 62 Earlier
  - 63 "No — do!"
  - 64 Rock blaster
  - 65 Mauna —
  - 66 Big magazine pitches
  - 68 Suze with financial tips
  - 69 Stir up, as silt
  - 70 NASDAQ kin
  - 73 Polishes
  - 76 Bride's belongings
  - 78 Green start?
  - 79 Big Red, e.g.
  - 80 Poet Lowell
  - 81 "— calling?"
  - 83 California's — Valley
  - 84 TDs, e.g.
  - 86 Fortitude
  - 87 — -bitsy
  - 88 Looking up
  - 89 Attend
  - 90 Imminent
  - 91 Lard holders
  - 92 Seminal punk band
  - 93 Distinguished
  - 97 Feared fly
  - 98 Luxury watch
  - 99 Actor Marvin company
  - 100 Vows
  - 101 In a tizzy
  - 102 Dol.
  - 103 Quotes
  - 107 Farm building
  - 108 Cruising
  - 109 South African Dutch
  - 110 Actress Faris
  - 112 "— bin ein Berliner"
  - 113 Nerf ball, e.g.
  - 114 Make public
  - 115 "— will not!"
  - 116 Genetic ID
  - 117 Actor Liotta
  - 118 Swelled head
- DOWN**
- 1 Sunday seats
  - 2 Court champ Arthur

# FUN PAGES

**SEMUCU**  
south east madera county united

**HELP YOUR  
COMMUNITY**

**Reach water sustainability  
and help the community with needs  
such as parks, a community center,  
safety, traffic and schools.**

**SEMUCU Annual Meeting**

**Monday, March 16 at 6 p.m. • Ranchos Pizza Factory**

**Help with SEMUCU and you help our neighborhood  
where our kids grow up and where we plan to retire.  
Southeast Madera is our back yard, our home and the  
place we live. It doesn't take a lot of time,  
meeting only once a month for about an hour.**

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