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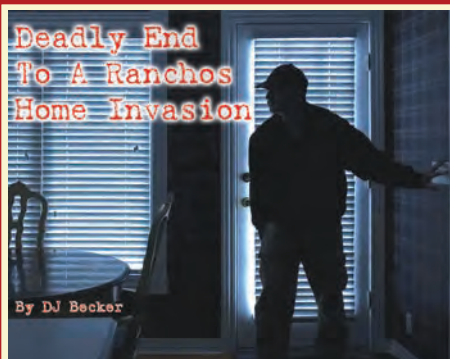
Deadly End To A Ranchos Home Invasion

By DJ Becker

Things end badly for an intruder
in the wrong Ranchos home
at the wrong time

In This Issue

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Donadelle Ranchos Residents in a home in the 15000 block of Monreal Road were startled awake by the sound of breaking glass about 3:15 Friday morning on Jan. 5 as an unknown male intruder kicked in the glass of their back door and entered their home, shouting, "Let me in or they are going to kill me!" according to Sheriff's Office reports.

Commander Bill Ward of the Madera County Sheriff's Department said the incident was isolated and unusual, and remains under investigation as a home invasion, a potential burglary and as a homicide.

"The female resident called 911 and stayed on the line as the male resident, 52, physically struggled to subdue and contain the intruder," Ward said. "At some point in the struggle, the suspect became unconscious. When deputies arrived, they attempted CPR and other life-saving measures but the suspect was deceased. The cause of death is unknown at this point, and toxicology and autopsy reports are pending. No weapons were used by either party in the incident or the struggle," Ward said.

The motive for the break-in was unusual and unknown, Ward said, and men-

tal health issues and/or illegal drug use by the suspect were also under investigation. No charges have been filed against the resident of the home in the normally quiet residential area of Monreal Road near Avenue 15, east of Road 36.

Authorities identified the deceased intruder as 37-year-old Daniel Alexander Avila. Investigators believe Avila may have been living somewhere in the Ranchos area, may have been on foot that evening and may have randomly selected the home to enter. He reportedly had no known connection to the residents on Monreal Road. Local arrest records indicate Avila had two prior arrests for DUI in 2022 but no other significant criminal history. He was 5'11", 230 pounds with brown hair and brown eyes.

Anyone with information on the incident is asked to call the Madera County Sheriff's Department at 675-7770.



Booking photo of 37-year-old Daniel Alexander Avila from July of 2022 when he was arrested in Madera County for driving under the influence.

GVUSD Kindergarten Registration

Spread the word – TK (Transitional Kindergarten) and Kindergarten registration is beginning for the 2024-2025 school year. Please bring your future kindergartener with you to your registration appointment as assessments will be given during the registration process.

In order to register your child, you will need the following: **1.** Your child must be 5 by Sept. 1, 2024 for Kindergarten. If your child will turn 5 between Sept. 2, 2024 and June 2, 2025, your child will qualify for Transitional Kindergarten. You will need to bring in his/her birth certificate to verify either. **2.** Your child's immunization record showing that your child is up-to-date on all of his or her shots: A. TB Test (A GVUSD Requirement); B. Polio (4); C. Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis (5); D. Measles, Mumps, Rubella (2); E. Hepatitis B (3); F. Varicella (Chicken Pox) (2). **3.** Proof of residency within the Golden Valley Unified School District boundaries: A. This can be a current utility bill, tax records, rental agreement, etc. **4.** A completed registration packet. **5.** A copy of the registering parent's driver's license.

Webster Elementary (645-3540)

Feb. 23 – 26, 2024 by appointment only. Kinder and TK registration packets can be picked up Monday through

Friday between 7:30 a.m. and 4 p.m. in the Webster office beginning Feb. 1. When you pick up your packet, you will schedule an appointment to return your packet for registration on Feb. 24. In addition, if you have concerns about your immunization records and would like to verify that your child has all of the necessary shots before your appointment, please feel free to bring the immunization card to the office when you pick up your packet.

Sierra View Elementary (645-3560)

Feb. 16, 2024 – 8:10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. by appointment only. Please call the school office at 645-3560 to schedule an appointment. Registration packets can be picked up Monday through Friday between 7:30 a.m. and 4 p.m. in the Sierra View office beginning Jan. 29. Please return all registration forms completed to the office by Feb. 9. Kindergarten Roundup will be by appointment only between 8:10 – 11:15 a.m. and TK Roundup will be between 1 – 2:30 p.m. on Feb. 16. In addition, if you would like to verify that your child's immunizations are up-to-date, please feel free to bring the immunization card to the office when you pick up your packet.

Stone Creek Elementary (645-3530)

Registration packets can be picked

Please see **KINDERGARTEN** on P. 3



Cal Bill Would Make All New Cars Limit Speed to 10 MPH Over Limit

By Andrew Mark Miller

California State Senator Scott Wiener says the bill requiring 'speed governors' would cut down on road deaths

A California Democratic lawmaker has introduced a bill he calls "ground-breaking" that would require all new cars sold in the Golden State to be equipped with a device preventing them from traveling more than 10 miles per hour over the speed limit.

State Sen. Scott Wiener, a Democrat from San Francisco, introduced the Speeding and Fatality Emergency Reduction on California Streets Package

this week that includes a provision that would require "new vehicles sold in California" to "install speed governors, smart devices that automatically limit the vehicle's speed to 10 miles above the legal limit."

"These changes are a head-on attempt to tackle vehicle fatalities, which are surging across the U.S. — and especially in California — amid a rise in reckless driving since the onset of the pandemic," a press release from Wiener's office explained. "A recent report from TRIP, a national transportation research group, found that traffic fatalities in California have increased by 22 percent from 2019 to 2022, compared to 19 percent for the U.S. overall. In 2022, 4,400 Californians died in car crashes."

The bill package also "requires side

underride guards on trucks, to reduce the risk of cars and bikes being pulled underneath the truck during a crash" and "physical improvements like new crosswalks and curb extensions on state-owned surface streets to better accommodate pedestrians, cyclists, the disability community and transit users."

The press release argues that these changes are meant to "slash" the "California road deaths epidemic."

"The alarming surge in road deaths is unbearable and demands an urgent response," Wiener said. "There is no reason for anyone to be going over 100 miles per hour on a public road, yet in 2020, California Highway Patrol issued over 3,000 tickets for just that offense. Preventing reckless speeding is a commonsense approach to prevent these ut-

terly needless and heartbreaking crashes."

Not everyone is on board with the legislation, including social media users who expressed frustration with the plan.

"Imagine an empty highway in the middle of the night and you can only go 65," author Richard Hanania posted on X.

"Just when you thought California couldn't possibly get any crazier," former San Diego County Board of Supervisors candidate Amy Reichert posted on X.

A spokesperson for the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration told Fox News Digital the agency "does not comment on pending legislation."

This article originally appeared on www.foxnews.com.

Click on "Local News" at

KINDERGARTEN cont. from P. 2
 up Monday through Friday between 7:30 a.m. and 4 p.m. in the Stone Creek office beginning Jan. 29. Please return all required registration forms and packet completed to the office by Friday, Feb. 23. When you return your packet, you will schedule an appointment for your student's assessment. Assessments will

be March 1, 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., by appointment only. You and your student will return on that date and time. In addition, if you have concerns about your immunization records and would like to verify that your child has all of the necessary shots before your appointment, please feel free to bring the immunization card to the office when you pick up your packet.

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Martin Luther King's Widow Fought Pro-Illegal Immigration

By John Binder

Coretta Scott King, the wife of Martin Luther King, Jr., once helped successfully quash legislation from Republicans and Democrats in the early 1990s that would have eliminated fines for United States employers hiring illegal aliens over Americans.

In 1991, former Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-UT) led an effort in Congress to pass legislation that would have thrown out the ability of the federal government to fine American employers for hiring illegal aliens — the leading magnet for illegal immigration to the nation for decades.

Former Sens. John McCain (R-AZ), Ted Kennedy (D-MA), Arlen Specter (R-PA), and Jeff Bingaman (D-NM) were co-sponsors of Hatch's legislation, while in the House Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) and then-Reps. Barbara Boxer (D-CA) and John Lewis (D-GA) were among the co-sponsors of an identical bill from former Rep. Edward Roybal (D-CA).

When Scott King got wind of Hatch's legislation, she authored a letter with other Civil Rights leaders detailing how illegal immigration diminishes wages, living standards, quality of life and employment opportunities for America's working class and, specifically, black Americans who are most likely to compete against illegal aliens for jobs.

"We are concerned, Senator Hatch, that your proposed ... elimination of employer sanctions will cause another problem — the revival of pre-1986 discrimination against black and brown U.S. and documented workers, in favor of cheap labor — the undocumented workers," Scott King wrote in

1991. "This would undoubtedly exacerbate an already severe economic crisis in communities where there are large numbers of new immigrants.

"Finally, we are concerned that some who support the repeal of employer sanctions are using "discrimination" as a guise for their desire to abuse undocumented workers and to introduce cheap labor into the U.S. workforce. America does not have a labor shortage. With roughly seven million people unemployed, and double that number discouraged from seeking work, the removal of employer sanctions threatens to add U.S. workers to the rolls of the unemployed.

"Additionally, it would add to the competition for scarce jobs and drive down wages. Moreover, the repeal of employer sanctions will inevitably add to our social problems and place an unfair burden on the poor in the cities in which most new immigrants cluster — cities which are already suffering housing shortages and insufficient human needs services."

According to Scott King, fining U.S. employers for hiring illegal aliens over Americans is a "necessary means of stopping the exploitation of vulnerable workers and the undercutting of American jobs and living standards."

Those who signed the letter with Scott King included William Lucy of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, Norman Hill with the A. Phillip Randolph Institute and Dr. Ramona Edelin of the National Urban Coalition, among others.

Thanks in part to Scott King's opposition, Hatch's bill failed in the House and Senate.

This article originally appeared at www.breitbart.com.

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Letters

Dear Editor:

I have seen a bright light in spite of the chaos and confusion all around us. Looking at the candidates for U.S. Senate I ignore the Democrats since they are the direct cause of the chaos and confusion emanating from Sacramento and Washington D.C. On the Republican side I see more conventional lawyers and even a baseball player. Then I saw the bright light: Sharleta Bassett of Biggs, Calif.

Sharleta and her husband have raised a large family. She is respected and endorsed by her local church, has served in the city assembly and is currently working in her family business as well as serving as mayor of Biggs.

What makes Sharleta a light in a time of darkness is her references to God, church, bible and Jesus. Our governing society has rejected God, biblical morality and Jesus as Lord of all. The result is dark-

ness, chaos and confusion everywhere.

I watched Sharleta on TV and heard her say that she did not choose to run for U.S. Senate until God told her to do it. And she obeyed God. She obviously is contributing positively to her community and has been given a mandate to bring Biblical morality and common sense to the U.S. Senate.

Some day, Sharleta will stand before God. He will likely say, "Well done." We all will stand before God. I, for one, want to hear the same words. I believe God put the thought in my mind to support Sharleta financially and to write this letter to the editor on her behalf.

I am for Sharleta Bassett and encourage the rest of us to support her with our resources, contacts and votes.

Knute Hansston
Rolling Hills

By Betty Van Valkenburg

Many of us in the "older but perhaps wiser" generation wonder whether today's students are learning about and appreciating America's history and its founders' insistence on individual liberty. With that in mind, quoted below is our nation's Bill of Rights, one of America's three founding documents, to be shared with youngsters as well as any older folks who could use a refresher course.

According to the Bill of Rights Institute website, "The Constitution lacked limits on government power. Federalists advocated for a strong national government. They believed the people and states automatically kept any powers not given to the federal government. Anti-Federalists wanted power to remain with state and local governments and favored a bill of rights to safeguard individual liberty.

"The first 10 amendments to the Constitution make up the Bill of Rights. James Madison wrote the amendments as a solution to limit government power and protect individual liberties through the Constitution. For example, the Founders saw the ability to speak and worship freely as a natural right protected by the First Amendment. Congress is prohibited from making laws establishing religion or abridging freedom of speech. The Fourth Amendment safeguards citizens' right to be free from unreasonable government intrusion in their homes through the requirement of a warrant."

The Bill of Rights

First Amendment: Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment



Refresher Course

of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.

Second Amendment: A well-regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed.

Third Amendment: No soldier shall, in time of peace be quartered in any house, without the consent of the owner, nor in time of war, but in a manner to be prescribed by law.

Fourth Amendment: The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.

Fifth Amendment: No person shall be held to answer for a capital, or otherwise infamous crime, unless on a presentment or indictment of a grand jury, except in cases arising in the land or naval forces, or in the militia, when in actual

Please see **TEA PARTY** on P. 17

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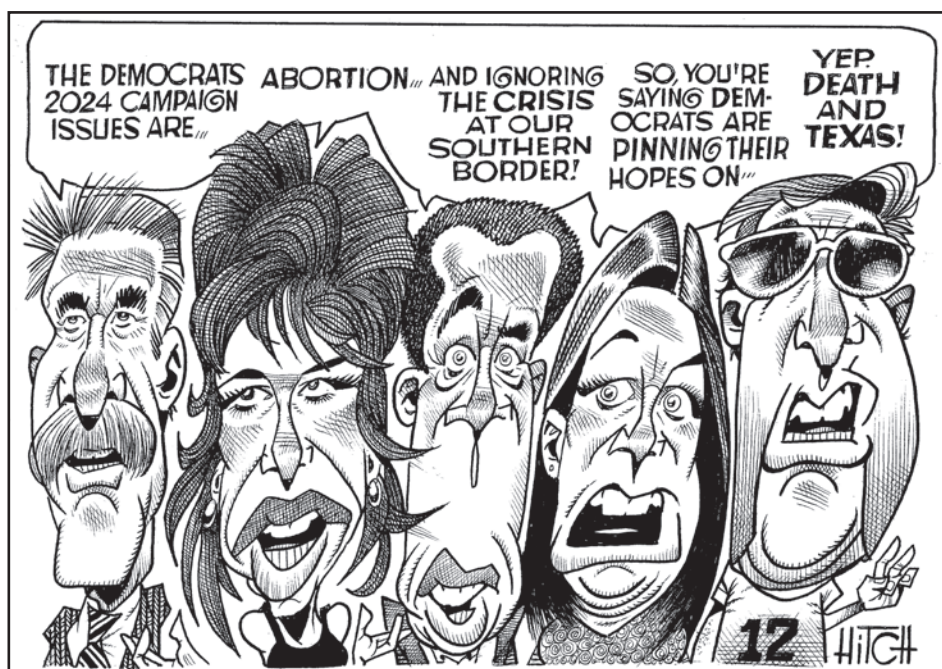
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Guest Editorial

Populism and the Rise of Trump

By Jeff Lukens

When in the course of human events it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the nonsense which has connected them with another, they should speak loudly about the hogwash that impels them to that separation. Conservatives have reached the breaking point between themselves and the progressive Left. We were the silent majority who must now speak loudly against the globalists who are running our country into oblivion. It is time for a change, and Donald Trump is the champion of our cause.

Globalist progressives have taken over all the vital institutions. Ordinary people say the economy

The only question is when and how the forces of national populism will end the rule of the Ivy League globalists who have done so much to ruin the nation.

unfairly provides an edge for the influential instead of benefiting everyone. Bi-coastal elites have become wealthy, concentrating on media, communications, technology, entertainment and finance. Ordinary people in the heartland have been left behind while their jobs have been outsourced to Asia and Latin America. Meanwhile, Democrats have chosen to walk away from everyday people living paycheck to paycheck rather than trying to win their votes.

Conservatives have lost control

over organizations that have shaped their communities over the years. Many judges and lawyers no longer respect a settled body of law. Churches no longer preserve our foundational Christian heritage, and college professors don't enforce firm standards of academic accomplishment. Globalist progressives have taken over all the vital institutions. Now, even parents are timid about enforcing discipline and passing on traditional family values to their children. Conservatives are mocked as people who cling to their

Bibles and their guns and are labeled as fascists, haters, homophobes and worse.

The ruling class has given us \$35 trillion in national debt; an underfunded,

politicized and emasculated military; more than 8 million illegal aliens; massive police defunding; 100,000 dead each year due to fentanyl; and a highly partisan DOJ and FBI. The ruling class see their wealth as a shield to protect them from the consequences of the mess they have gotten us into.

Growing Level of Anger in America

There is a growing level of anger in America. Defunding the police, illegal immigration, rising crime, green energy and the woke doctrines of DEI and CRT have proven disastrous to the lives of working-class people, and they are pushing them toward the conservative cause. People see societal dysfunction as an alarming hazard to their way of life. There is talk of secession. We have never seen anything like this, and it is getting worse. This is a battle between good and evil, and ordinary people are starting to fight back as never before.

Deplorables are awakening to their vast, unharnessed power. Rising opposition by working people is turning the tables and leading to increased boycotts and open protests over the wokery of the Left. With the rise of the internet, the government is losing the facade of being kept honest by an independent press corps. Grassroots patriots are finding new ways to communicate ideas they have never expressed publicly. People are flocking to citizen

Please see **EDITORIAL** on P. 17

The Independent

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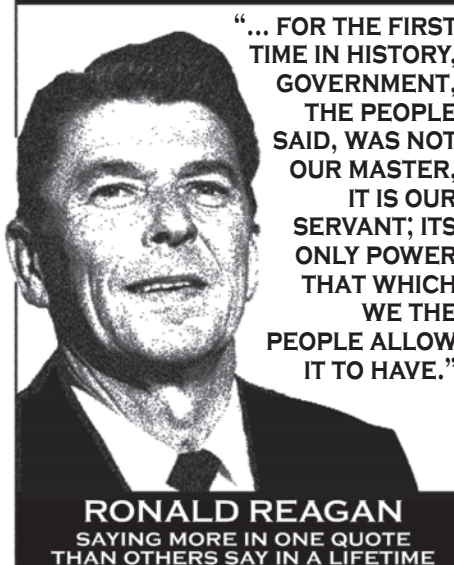
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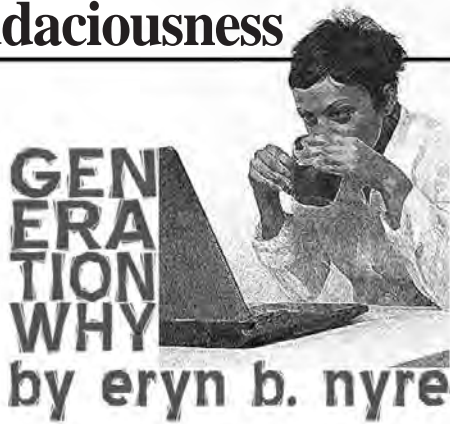
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The Audacity of Audaciousness



I would say that I am shocked by the level of audacity some people exhibit, but I'm not even sure that's possible anymore. We have a surplus of audacity in the world today, and I feel like the lion's share of it exists in my company. Working with the demographic of people that I happen to work with comes with many benefits, one of which is that it gives me plenty of stories to write about. I can't think of any more benefits at this particular moment, but I'm sure they'll come to me.

I've talked about what I do many times over the years. One aspect of my job is certifying our caregivers in CPR, which is required by both state and federal mandate. Just this past week, I was in the office to teach a class when I had to deal with an annoying lady and two of her minions who didn't want to be there and had absolutely no issue making that clear to me and the other students.

As I sent around the sign-in sheet this banshee of a woman asked why they all had to take CPR so often. For reference, they only have to take the class once every two years. I don't particularly think that qualifies as often, but theory of relativity and all. I said this to her and she replied that she just took the class in October. Spoiler alert. She didn't. We didn't do CPR in October. I know this for a fact because we shut down CPR recertification in October to make room for our state mandated annual training classes. Having been to this particular rodeo more than a few times in the years I've worked in this position, I made the educated guess that she had taken the annual training class and couldn't differentiate between a lecture course and doing the chest compression cha-cha on a plastic mannequin. I gave her a professional version of this explanation and assumed the conversation was over. I was wrong. I was wrong and getting more annoyed with every syl-

lable her nasally voice uttered. After several rounds of her, "No, I am sure it was CPR," to which I responded, "We didn't hold any CPR classes this past October," she finally demanded I check my records. By this point she had managed to whip up two other squawky little hens who parroted her claim that they all recertified in October. After what I humbly refer to as an award-worthy performance of self-control and professionalism, I man-

We have a surplus of audacity in the world today, and I feel like the lion's share of it exists in my company.

aged to get them to shut up, sit down, and start watching the video with a promise that I would double-check our records, which I did. It was no surprise that it showed that all of their CPR certifications were, in fact, expired, but I didn't stop there. In a type-A, control freak moment I decided to dig deep and get the entire story. I was right, they were here in October ... for the annual training classes. Then I went further, because now I had a point to prove. I checked the sign-in sheets at reception and in the last two years all three of those women had only walked into the building eight times in total. Every one of their certifications was at least two months expired.

I know I should have just walked back into the training room and said I didn't find a record of them attending in October. I couldn't do it. After the scene they made I had the burning need to make sure they knew they were not only mistaken, they were "double secret" mistaken. I pulled them all out into the hall to speak to them

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

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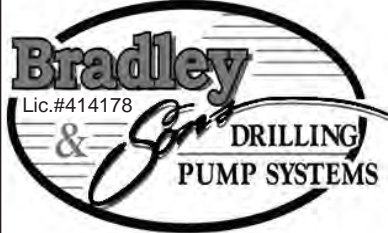
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GEN WHY cont. from P. 6

privately and explained what I found. The two minions nodded and went back to their seats without any more argument. Troublemaker number one, however, basically ignored literally all the perfectly simple words I said to her. Instead, she pointed to the copy of the sign-in sheet I was showing her and triumphantly said, “See, I told you that I just came for CPR in October.” For reference, the date at the top of the sheet in giant letters was November of 2021. I stared at her in absolute incredulity. I’ve met some thick-headed people in my life, but this was a first. I pointed to the date and

asked her to read it out loud. She did, but it didn’t seem to register, so I proceeded to (as gently as I could) explain to her that though right next to each other on the calendar, October and November were not actually the same month. Furthermore, the year 2021 is definitely not the same as 2023, no matter how much it seems like it. So basically, everything on that page should have convinced her to tuck her tail between her legs and go back to her seat. Not this brick wall of a human being. No, this woman shrugged and said, “if you say so.” I don’t say so, ma’am. The calendar does.

Seriously, the audacity of some people.



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Getting Things Done

If I waited until I felt like it to put my business data into QuickBooks, clean the toilets and wash sheets — they wouldn’t get done. I need structure. I like this definition: “Construct or arrange according to a plan; give a pattern or organization to.”

Most of us find structure much easier when it’s compulsory.

“I get everything done at work.”

“Winter break is over, and nothing’s checked off my list.”

“Why is it so hard to accomplish things now that I’m retired?”

Sound familiar? When deadlines and schedules are enforced by outward sources, we’re often more responsible with our “to-dos.”

One of my self-imposed to-dos is to make a Christmas photo book before the next Christmas arrives. When you have a whole year to get something done, it’s easy to put it off. Last year, I failed to do it until the last minute — making the project more stressful than it needed to be.

You might have a half dozen things floating around in your head needing your immediate attention and another half dozen waiting on the back burner. Without some structure, it can feel

overwhelming. Things can fall through the cracks. Grab your 2024 calendar and walk through these tips for a productive new year.

Create a pattern for repeated tasks/activities. Choose a time of the day, day of the week, or day of the month depending on the task or activity. Record it on your calendar like an appointment. This is important for things like bill-paying, household chores, exercising and even family times.

Create appointments for projects and to-dos. Need to follow-up on a disputed bill, return library books, pay 2022’s taxes? Want to organize your closet, close out your storage unit, visit Yosemite? We are much more likely to accomplish these things when we put them on

You might have a half dozen things floating around in your head needing your immediate attention and another half dozen waiting on the back burner. Without some structure, it can feel overwhelming.

the calendar for a specific date and time.

Identify the benefits. My family and I enjoy looking at the Christmas photo books from previous years. Closing out your storage unit

is money in your pocket. Visiting Yosemite creates a memory to treasure. Identifying benefits incentivizes us to push through the temptation to procrastinate.

Identify the consequences. Consequences increase exponentially. The longer something hangs over your head, the more stress is attached to it. Financial penalties accrue when bills or taxes are ignored. Our physical fitness quickly works in reverse when we stop being active. The paper pile takes more time to sort the longer it builds. Last year the Yosemite falls were much less spectacular because we failed to schedule a

Please see **ORGANIZE** on P. 9

Superbowl Snacks

(January 2014)

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.

This article was written before Superbowl XLVIII in 2014 between the Seahawks and Broncos.



by Jean Briner

– \$9; Peanuts – \$6; a bottle of water – \$5; Draft beer – \$12.

So I think I am convinced I'm going to stay home, enjoy the game in a nice warm home with family and friends, drinks and snacks in the next room and, oh yeah, a potty room right down the hall. Look at it another way: I've not spent a few thousand dollars.

Wherever you spend the day hopefully watching your favorite team run all over the opposing team, you have to have snacks. Nothing fancy, not a three course meal, and for heaven's sake only finger foods. The most you should have to put on the table are some paper plates and napkins. Be sure to do the mixing, cooking and whatever else is necessary on Saturday so that on Sunday when you get home from church all you have to do is

get your snacks on the table, maybe order a pizza, and enjoy your guests and the game. The game starts at 3:25 p.m.

I found a recipe that sounds easy, and good:

Chicken Cheese Balls

1 rotisserie chicken – purchased at the store

¼ C hot sauce – or amount you like

1 tsp. black pepper

1 ¾ C grated cheddar cheese

¼ C sliced green onions

1 C flour

3 eggs, beaten lightly

2 C bread crumbs (panko are best)

Vegetable oil for frying

Have oil heated to 350 degrees

Take the meat from the chicken, discarding the skin and

bones. Shred the chicken and put in large bowl, add the hot sauce, pepper, cheese and green onions. Toss to combine. Roll the mixture in small balls, about the size of a golf ball.

In three separate pans (pie plates work well) place the flour in one, the eggs in another and the bread crumbs in the third. Roll each of the balls first in the flour, then in the eggs and finally in the bread crumbs. Place on a cookie sheet until ready to fry. When the oil is ready, fry the balls in batches. Cook for about 2 minutes per batch. Place the cooked balls on a plate, lined with paper towels to drain.

Serve the chicken balls with Ranch Dressing or make your own Blue Cheese Dressing:

1 ½ C mayonnaise

½ C packed blue cheese –

broken up

½ tsp. hot sauce

2 tsp. Worcestershire sauce

1 tsp. salt

Juice of half a lemon

1 tsp. chopped garlic

In large bowl, combine all ingredients and adjust the seasoning. Serve in small bowl with the chicken balls.

My two favorite dips, and easy to make, are:

Seven Layer Dip

The quantities in this recipe will depend on the size of the serving plate you use. When I take it to our family party, I use a large flat-rimmed baking sheet.

Layer from bottom to top:

Refried Beans

Sour Cream

Please see **RECIPES** on P. 9

So, after 17 weeks of football, is your team in the playoffs? Of course we would like to see our favorite team win and be in the playoffs, and ultimately end up in the Super Bowl, but after reading about this year's Super Bowl I'm not so sure I would want to go. To convince you that maybe this isn't the year to go, I found some statistics.

It will be played in the Met Life Stadium in East Rutherford, New Jersey in a stadium that does not have a roof on it. According to the Weather Channel, the weather forecast is a high of 39 with a low of 20 for the 2nd of February, the day of the game.

Tickets on the 50 yard line are around \$7,650 and in the nose bleed

section around \$2,337.

No ice chests, back packs, women's handbags or umbrellas – what do you do if it rains, or worse yet, snows? However, you can take in a blanket – only if it is slung over your shoulder – that's what the rule book says.

And here's the kicker – no tail gating! If you want to eat or drink, you have to purchase from the concessions inside the stadium. And a few of those prices: Ultimate Nachos – \$14; Hot dog

Wherever you spend the day hopefully watching your favorite team run all over the opposing team, you have to have snacks. Nothing fancy, not a three course meal, and for heaven's sake only finger foods. The most you should have to put on the table are some paper plates and napkins.

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RECIPES cont. from P. 8

Guacamole
 Canned, diced chiles
 Shredded lettuce
 Chopped tomatoes
 Shredded cheese (I like to mix cheddar, jack or pepper jack)
 Chopped black olives
 Chopped green onions
 This is such a versatile recipe; you can use more of one

of the ingredients that you or your family prefers and you can add a layer of salsa or serve it on the side. Serve with tortilla chips.

Sour Cream and Onion Dip

1 pint sour cream
 1 pkg. dry onion soup mix

In a small bowl mix the sour cream and soup mix, put a lid on it and refrigerate until ready to serve. This should be mixed at least 24 hour before serving so

onions can soften. Best when served with ruffled potato chips.

And you can't have a snack table without something sweet:

Caramel Brownies

1 stick butter, melted
 1/3 C and 1/2 C evaporated milk
 1 box German Chocolate cake mix
 1 C finely chopped pecans or walnuts

90 caramels, unwrapped
 1/3 C semisweet chocolate chips
 Powdered sugar for dusting top of brownies (Optional)

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Lightly butter and flour a 9x9 baking pan.

Pour 1/3 C evaporated milk in a bowl with the cake mix. Add the melted butter and the chopped nuts. Mix the ingredients together – it will be real thick.

Divide the dough in half. Press half of dough in bottom of prepared pan for first layer. Bake until slightly set, about 8 to 10 minutes. Remove from oven and

set aside. While the first layer is baking, unwrap the caramels and put in top of a double boiler with the remaining 1/2 C evaporated milk. Stir occasionally until the caramels are melted and the mixture is smooth. Pour the caramel layer over the baked layer, spreading evenly. Sprinkle the chocolate chips over the warm caramel layer.

On a piece of waxed paper spread the remaining brownie mix into a square slightly smaller than the baking pan. Carefully lay it on top of caramel and chocolate chip layer. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes – do not overbake. Remember, they will continue to bake after you take them from the oven. Remove from oven and let cool to room temperature. Cover the pan and refrigerate for several hours to allow to set. When you're ready to serve, sprinkle with powdered sugar (optional) and cut into squares. Serve with lots of cold milk or hot coffee.

Whatever you do – HAVE A GOOD TIME!

(And GO BRONCOS!)

ORGANIZE cont. from P. 7

trip for earlier in the season. If the benefits don't get you going, consider the consequences of not following through.

Create a contingency plan. This year I've scheduled some dates to work on my Christmas photo book early in the year. I've also written it down to do in July — just in case. Life often doesn't pan out as planned. If we're prepared, we're more likely to have success even when that happens.

If you're one who can rely completely on your memory and internal motivation to do it all — that's great! For the rest of us, structuring to-dos and using our calendars for more than doctor and hair appointments can mean the difference between getting things done, and not.

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

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Senior Report

New Year? New Activities — Ranchos/Hills Senior Center has Plenty of Events for Seniors in 2024

By *Melanie Williams*

Welcome to the Ranchos/Hills Senior Center. The 2024 New Year has begun.

We invite all seniors in the community to come and see what activities might interest you at the Senior Center. Renewal Membership forms were emailed or sent through the mail during the last week of December. If they were missed, we have forms available at the reception desk in the Senior Center.

The first Monthly Sale of 2024 opens on Saturday, Feb. 3. The Treasure House and Boutique Sale in the main building of the Senior Center will open at 8 a.m. and close at 12 p.m. The Senior Center receives many donated items throughout the year from the Ranchos community. Thank you to all who help keep the Senior Center open through your membership and donations.

We have plenty of activities to attend for all seniors in the community. Our Annual Valentine's Day Potluck is happening on Wednesday, Feb. 14 at 5 p.m. Join us for a fun time on "sweethearts' day" with a few surprises planned for the night. Make sure to call and sign up at the Senior Center to reserve your spot at 559-645-4864.

We have our monthly Game Night Potluck and General Meeting on Thursday, Feb. 8 at 5 p.m. No sign ups are required, just come with a hot or cold dish for eight to 10 people and your own plate and tableware. Don't forget a friendly smile and your favorite table game to share with others.

Seniors can join us at our monthly Birthday and Anniversary Luncheon on the third Saturday of each month. We celebrate our seniors and their special days. This upcoming month, we are meeting at the Liberty Café on Saturday, Feb. 17 at 11:30 a.m. Please sign up at the Senior Center so we can call for seating reservations.

Weekly activities at the Ranchos/Hills Senior Center include the exercise class led by Jo Chase every Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 10 a.m. Players of card and table games also meet together every Thursday at 12:15 p.m. Many seniors just like to stop by to work on our puzzles each month.

Daily senior meals are back again in 2024 at the



Card games, board games, jigsaw puzzles and much more ... the Ranchos/Hills Senior Center has mapped out activities for Ranchos-area seniors for 2024 that include events coinciding with holidays, birthdays and anniversaries. In addition, there are exercise classes and a daily lunch program. Contact the Senior Center at 645-5864 for more information.

Ranchos/Hills Senior Center. Seniors don't need to be members to enjoy a wonderful hot meal during the week. The Senior Lunch Program offers adults from 60 years and older a nutritionally balanced lunch every weekday the Senior Center is open. Some favorite meals include chicken fajitas and pulled BBQ pork sandwiches. Jaime does a great job with the hot meals and makes everyone feel welcome. We work with the Eastern Madera Recreation and Parks Department to provide this outreach to all the seniors in the community.

If you would like to help plan or introduce a new activity for the Senior Center calendar, we welcome new suggestions and volunteers to help us make it happen for our local seniors. The next Planning Meeting is on Monday, Feb. 26 at 1 p.m. A volunteer senior at our reception desk can give you information on our weekly activities and upcoming events every weekday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

We are looking forward to a great New Year at the Ranchos/Hill Senior Center. Happy Valentine's Day.

Quote for February: *"February is the perfect time to cherish friendship,*

celebrate dreams and goals, and refocus on living an intentional life." -Unknown

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Golden Oak 4-H

By Jacob Garzon

Over the two to three weeks that kids have off for winter break, most of them spend their time relaxing and playing video games or watching T.V. However, not all kids spend their time relaxing around the house. Over winter break, 4-H members are hard at work with all the activities in which they are involved. For example, Golden Oak 4-H members are busy preparing for their upcoming fair season, staying on a constant feeding schedule and keeping their animal pens clean.

One Golden Oak 4-H member, Hunter Williams-Smith, explains the troubles of taking care of animals. "One of the most difficult tasks of owning animals is definitely damage control due to the weather," he said. "The weather definitely takes a toll on the animals' health and the pens. Vacation can also be a hassle because it can be hard to find someone who is willing to feed your animals twice a day for multiple days."



As part of his continuing preparation, Wyatt Morgan grooms his steer months before the Madera Fair.

4-H members are also planning ahead due to the two fairs in our area. This includes the preparation for the purchases of animals due to the strict weight, age and species requirement for each fair. This means to meet their requirements, 4-H members must calculate the nutritional value of the food they are giving to their animals. Some 4-H projects require members to plan out their breeding schedule to align with proper birth dates in order to meet the age requirement.

All of this work has a purpose, and it has a payoff. 4-H members are working to build their projects and make their skills better. This pays off at fair time when they show their animals, and sometimes win, and when they sell their animals, hopefully for a profit. We all know that hard work is worth it, and 4-H is a great example of this.

4-H Happenings
4-H Happenings
4-H Happenings
4-H Happenings
4-H Happenings
4-H Happenings
4-H Happenings
4-H Happenings



Sierra Shadows 4-H

By Mikayla Carr

Last month the Sierra Shadows 4-H Club had a Christmas potluck. The event was held at the Liberty Leaf building. The meal included salads, desserts, hot chocolate, bread and pasta. A game that the members played was musical chairs and the kids loved it. After the games and feast, the members had their ornament exchange.

This month, the January 4-H meeting was held on Jan. 9. The meeting started at 7 p.m. and ended at 8 p.m. and started with the pledges followed by the treasurer and secretary reports. Next the healthy living officers did a presentation on New Year's resolutions. They said that in order to achieve your



The members of the Sierra Shadows 4-H Club enjoyed their Christmas potluck dinner and then got involved in a Christmas ornament exchange with fellow members following the meal.)

Please see 4-H on P. 15

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4. Because the Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce unifies the public spirit of the Ranchos and directs it into useful and constructive channels that are not limited to business.
5. Because I feel a sense of personal obligation to improve the quality of life where I live.

The Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce would love to see you at our next meeting, this time on the first Wednesday of the month. Join us on February 7 at 6 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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SEE YOU SUNDAY!

SEMUCU speaks

By Igal Treibatch

What next?

What is SEMCU resolved to do next? Help re-introduce the Flatlander's Day Parade & Fair.

1. Hold a Yard Sale at the Flatlander's Day Parade & Fair to help the Golden Valley Schools, Senior Center and local U.S. Veterans with funds we raise. 2. Help donors to the Flatlander's Day Parade & Fair "Yard Sale" get tax deductions while helping our community. 3. Hold a raffle for every donating party holding a receipt from SEMCU at the end of the fair.

There has always been a "crafts fair" at the parade featuring different vendors of art, home goods, food and information about community services. This year's parade and fair are scheduled to take place on Saturday, May 18 at Liberty High School.

SEMUCU is planning a Flatlander's Day Parade & Fair "Yard Sale" and a raffle during the day of the parade to help our community's Senior Citizens, our local U.S. Veterans and our Golden Valley Schools. All donating parties will receive a raffle ticket to be drawn after the parade and have a chance to win.

We all collect unused items in our



backyards, garages and closets. Springtime is coming and spring cleaning can help us all. There are more than 4,000 homes around Southeastern Madera County and I have no doubt we can all use some help in getting rid of unused clutter while we get a TAX CREDIT that will reduce our taxes. No donated item is too small or too big.

SEMUCU is a non-profit organization, and donations can be an asset to the donor. A SEMCU donation receipt for the estimated value of the donation may be used as a "deduction" from your tax bill. Beginning in February, we will make available a free pickup of donated items (until the parade's date)

from your home just by calling 559-363-9095. You will receive a legitimate receipt for the estimated value of your donation for your tax deduction and a raffle ticket for the drawing that will take place at the end of the parade. You may donate anything from work tools, bicycles, cars, furniture, clothes, books, paintings, art, camping equipment or pretty much anything else.

SEMUCU's next meeting on Feb. 19 at 6 p.m. will be held at the library Teleconference Room at 37398 Berkshire Dr. in the Ranchos. The public is invited and encouraged to participate and offer ideas for projects to help our community. You may come by or participate online by going to www.SEMCU.org for the link, or participate by calling 669-900-6833. Enter meeting ID# 836-3242-4343 with access code 854221.

SEMUCU is "By the Community, For the Community"

In Memoriam

Victor Lee Coffey

February 6, 1935 -- January 23, 2024

Phyllis Ann Coffey

August 26, 1931 -- January 26, 2024



Victor and Phyllis Coffey, both from Green River, Wyoming, and residents of Madera Ranchos, California, are now in their Heavenly Home. They were married for 68 years.

Victor Lee Coffey passed away on Jan. 23, 2024 at the age of 88 and Phyllis Ann Coffey passed away three days later on Jan. 26, 2024 at the age of 92.

They are survived by three children: Darold, LeAnn (husband Mike Fursman), and Denise (husband Terry Breeden); along with five Grandchildren, nine Great Grandchildren and three Great Great Grandchildren.

Until we all meet again ...

The Bookshelf

2024 Brings New Library Offerings

By Jerrica Edmundson

2024 has arrived, and with it we are ramping up the offerings we have here at the Ranchos Library. We are always searching for new ways to support the community and we finally can announce the implementation of our newest offering: the Library of Things. This is a program where you can check out physical items, not just books. We have things like guitars, sewing machines, GoPro cameras, telescopes, microscopes, knitting and crochet beginner kits, and so much more available to request and check out just like you would a book. You must be over 18 to check these items out and we are limited to one item out at a time per person, but we are so excited to have this expanded offering available for our patrons.

We still have our Zip Books program running, where you can have a direct impact on what we add to the library collection. Zip Books allows us to order books and audiobooks to be delivered straight to your door, so long as they are available on Amazon and can be catalogued through our circulation system. Ask us at the desk if you would like more information about this great program.

The previously promised magazine expansion has finally come to be, and we have loads of different magazine subscriptions available for perusal

within the branch, as well as the usual offering of the Fresno Bee, Madera Tribune, and of course the Ranchos Independent. While these are not able to be checked out, we do have them all readily available for browsing and even offer comfy chairs and couches for relaxing in the temperature-controlled environment we maintain. Come hang out and stay dry and warm and take part in our free Wi-Fi connections and quiet atmosphere.

I have officially started planning for our 2024 Summer Reading Program, and I can't say much about the details, but I can say it will be a fun one. Keep an eye out on our Facebook page for details as they are available.

As always, we are so appreciative of the community support and feedback we receive, and if there is ever a way we can do something to help, let us know.

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4-H cont. from P. 11

resolution, you can make a list of the things you want to accomplish and tape it to a door. After the meeting there was a snack and game of Four Corners that the recreation officers put together. There was also a raffle that the hostesses prepared.

The officer that is being highlighted this month is our 2023-2024 president of the Sierra Shadows 4-H club, Jake Poore. The following questions were answered

by Jake.

Q: Why did you want to become president?

A: I felt like it was a good opportunity to meet new people and learn new skills.

Q: Who encouraged you to become president?

A: My sister Payton Poore.

Q: When did you start 4-H and why?

A: I started at age 9 because I loved animals and my family was in it.

Q: Were you another type of 4-H of-

ficer besides the president?

A: Yes. I was a recreation officer and the vice president.

Q: What do you enjoy the most about 4-H?

A: I love the community and I like to help others.

Q: What projects are you in and which ones do you enjoy the most?

A: I am in the projects beef, horses and dogs. I enjoy doing beef the most because I like showing them.

Q: What is your job as president of the Sierra Shadows 4-H group?

A: My job is to be a leader, welcome new members, and run the meetings.

Q: How do you feel about being president?

A: It feels awesome and it helps with my speaking skills.

On Jan. 20, Sierra Shadows hosted a

special Madara County event called Favorite Foods Day. Members brought their home-cooked foods to be sampled by local judges and were awarded pins and prizes for their efforts. The food categories included bread, cookies, appetizers, cakes and main dishes. The members also had to display their goods in an eye-catching way. In addition, members displayed and decorated areas and created menus that were judged and there were also special categories that the members entered. Always a fun event, the Madera County 4-H has been doing Favorite Foods Day for years. Also, a special thanks to all the judges who gave up their time to judge.

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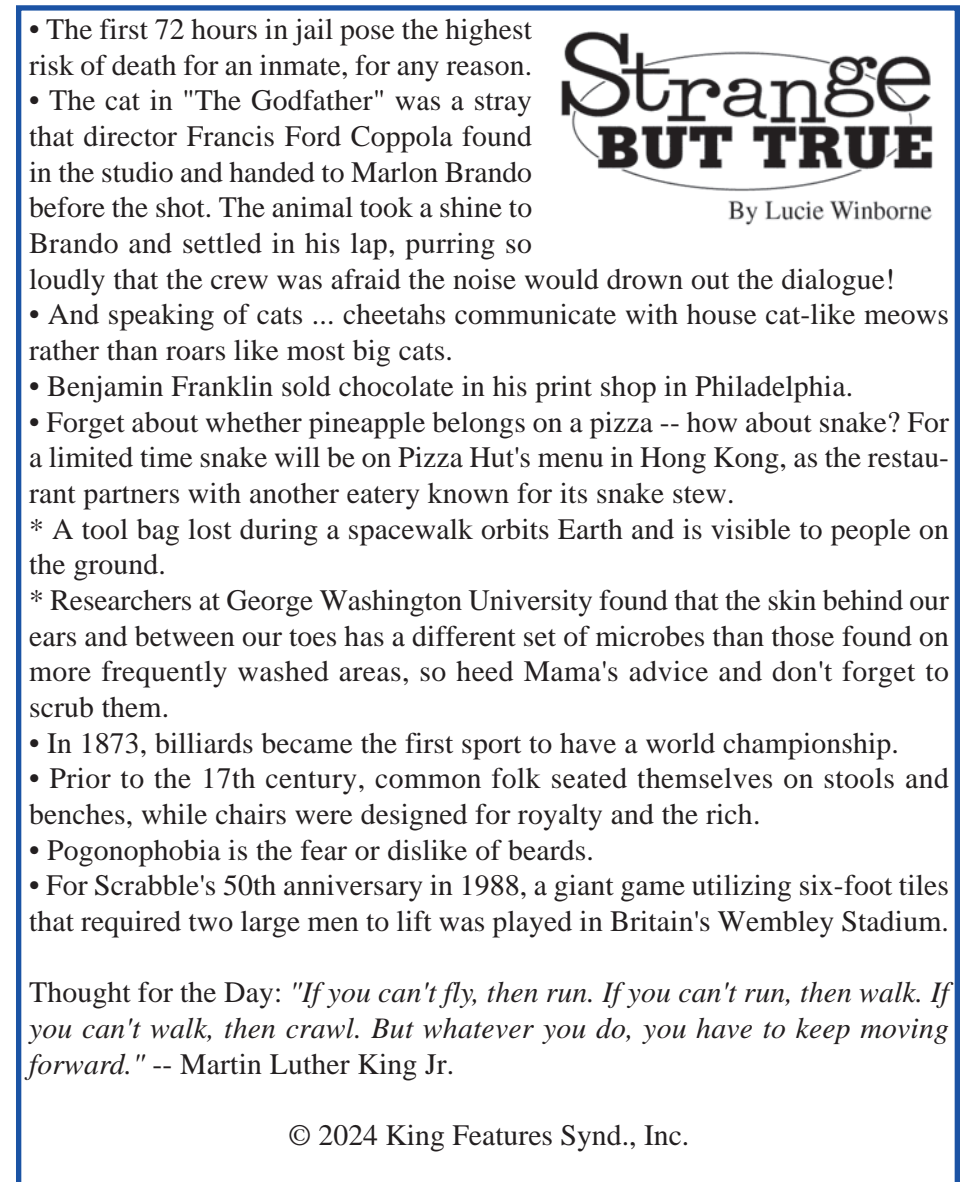
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Strange BUT TRUE

By Lucie Winborne

- The first 72 hours in jail pose the highest risk of death for an inmate, for any reason.
- The cat in "The Godfather" was a stray that director Francis Ford Coppola found in the studio and handed to Marlon Brando before the shot. The animal took a shine to Brando and settled in his lap, purring so loudly that the crew was afraid the noise would drown out the dialogue!
- And speaking of cats ... cheetahs communicate with house cat-like meows rather than roars like most big cats.
- Benjamin Franklin sold chocolate in his print shop in Philadelphia.
- Forget about whether pineapple belongs on a pizza -- how about snake? For a limited time snake will be on Pizza Hut's menu in Hong Kong, as the restaurant partners with another eatery known for its snake stew.
- * A tool bag lost during a spacewalk orbits Earth and is visible to people on the ground.
- * Researchers at George Washington University found that the skin behind our ears and between our toes has a different set of microbes than those found on more frequently washed areas, so heed Mama's advice and don't forget to scrub them.
- In 1873, billiards became the first sport to have a world championship.
- Prior to the 17th century, common folk seated themselves on stools and benches, while chairs were designed for royalty and the rich.
- Pogonophobia is the fear or dislike of beards.
- For Scrabble's 50th anniversary in 1988, a giant game utilizing six-foot tiles that required two large men to lift was played in Britain's Wembley Stadium.

Thought for the Day: *"If you can't fly, then run. If you can't run, then walk. If you can't walk, then crawl. But whatever you do, you have to keep moving forward."* -- Martin Luther King Jr.

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Say you saw it in the Independent

Kiwanis Korner

Kiwanis Make Plans for 2024

By Sally Rowden

Our Valentine's Day Fundraiser is underway and ticket cost is \$45 each to get a chance at a possible win of a limo ride with your loved ones on Saturday, Feb. 10. The winning ticket will be drawn on Feb. 4 at the Pizza Factory on Avenue 12 at 6:30 p.m. You do not have to be present to win. All proceeds go to supporting our children and communities of eastern Madera. For tickets reach out to Sally Rowden at 559-908-7073 or Mona Diaz at 559-333-1913. You can also go by the Chamber Office at 37167 Ave. 12 Ste. 5C for tickets.

The John Minney-Liberty High School Scholarship Fundraiser will be starting up by the end of this month with letters going out to individuals and businesses requesting monetary support for the three to four scholarships awarded to graduating Liberty High School seniors. Contact Sally Rowden at 559-908-7073 or rowdensally2@gmail.com with any questions.

The month of March will see Kiwanis as servers at the Chamber of Commerce Crab Feed and hosting a Kiwanis Open House – Meet N Greet. In April, you will see us at the Kiwanis Club of Fresno with Special Olympics at the Fresno Dante Club. Then in May we will be helping with the Flatlander's Day Parade & Fair and serving at a Teacher's Luncheon at Liberty High School.

Meetings are every Tuesday and Thursday evening at 6:30 p.m. at Second Son Brews at 37167 Ave. 12 Ste. 4C.

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Drawing will be held February 4 at Pizza Factory at 6:30 p.m. You do not need to be present to win.



*All proceeds go to the Madera Ranchos Kiwanis Club, which supports the children of our community and schools.

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What's Happening
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DECEMBER 2023

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Median Days on Market
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Median Sold Price
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Median Price/SF Sold
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Data based on the Fresno County MLS

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TEA PARTY cont. from P. 4

service in time of war or public danger; nor shall any person be subject for the same offense to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb; nor shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself, nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation.

Sixth Amendment: In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the state and district wherein the crime shall have been committed, which district shall have been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his

favor, and to have the assistance of counsel for his defense.

Seventh Amendment: In suits at common law, where the value in controversy shall exceed 20 dollars, the right of trial by jury shall be preserved, and no fact tried by a jury, shall be otherwise re-examined in any court of the United States, than according to the rules of the common law.

Eighth Amendment: Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.

Ninth Amendment: The enumeration in the Constitution, of certain rights, shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people.

Tenth Amendment: The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the states, are reserved to the states respectively, or to the people.

EDITORIAL cont. from P. 5

licly. People are flocking to citizen journalists who allow them to decide for themselves what is essential. Videos, blogs, social media, Substack articles and private webpages now empower everyday people. This free-speech insurgence is ending the censorship of what the government deems newsworthy.

The only question is when and how the forces of national populism will end the rule of the Ivy League globalists who have done so much to ruin the nation. Fortunately, a pivotal individual has arisen to champion the forgotten people and become our leader in this critical and historic time. That man is Donald Trump. Under Trump's stewardship, the Spirit of America will prevail and consign progressive ideology to oblivion.


Winston Churchill is a classic example of a unique individual who changed the course of history. When Churchill was named prime minister, England was about to be conquered. Churchill averted defeat by calling upon the latent inner strength of the British people. If Churchill had not been on the world stage during that critical time in 1940, our lives would be very different today. And as Winston Churchill was a pivotal person in his time, Donald Trump is also being cast into that extraordinary role in our time.

In 2016, it seemed doubtful that

Donald Trump could be elected president. Progressives believed Hillary Clinton would turn the nation into a radical one-party state. Trump prevented that. And opponents went nuts trying every possible contrivance to sabotage his presidency, including a worldwide pandemic and a stolen election to bring him down. But Trump's fall was only temporary. The manic response by the Left to his reemergence confirms that Donald Trump is that essential person for whom we have been waiting. He has energized a nationalist-populist movement with an energy never seen before in American history.

Under his stewardship, the Spirit of America will prevail and consign progressive ideology to oblivion. Patronizing Left-wingers, living in their protected lifestyles, care nothing for the less advantaged. Working-class people know full well they are unprotected and exposed to the devastating policies the governing class imposes on them. Donald Trump is their chosen leader because he is the only national figure who will truly stand up for them. The battle lines are drawn and we all must be involved and do what we can to support Donald Trump and local America First candidates in saving our country from the globalist takeover.

Jeff Lukens is a West Point graduate, U.S. Army veteran and conservative activist. This article originally appeared at canadafreepress.com.




Prepping the soil

Work now to improve your soil for the coming year's growth. First: do a **soil test** to see if it is lacking pH-raising materials like lime, or acidifying items like elemental sulfur, and purchase what is needed. With a pitchfork or spade, gently begin breaking up your existing soil, then gently work in compost, cow or horse manure, any needed materials determined by your soil testing, and organic fertilizers like greensand, rock phosphate, kelp, bonemeal or bloodmeal. The microbes and beneficial soil-dwellers will start working right away to break all these nutrients down in time for spring planting. - Brenda Weaver

Source: bonnieplants.com

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• If you like taking baths, you can invest in a second rubber bath mat to drape over the side of the tub. The edge will be nonslip, so you can hold on for support and your hands will not slide.



• Sunburn happens in the winter too, especially on the slopes. Use a cotton ball soaked in cold tea to ease tight dry skin. Be sure you apply sunscreen to your face and wear eye protection when going out to play in the snow.

• For drains slowed by grease, sprinkle a half-cup each of salt and baking soda down the drain, and follow it with an entire kettle or pot of boiling water.

• If the smell in your cedar chest has faded, you can bring it back easily with extra-fine sandpaper. A very light sanding is all it takes in most cases.

• For delicious baked potatoes, boil a pot of salted water, add whole potatoes with skin, remove from heat and let stand for 15 minutes. Finish in the oven for a sturdier skin. Start checking for doneness after 15 minutes in the oven. Baking time can be cut in half! -- J.L. in Florida

• Remove musty smell from stored clothes by adding either vinegar or ammonia to the wash water. Be sure to check for smell removal BEFORE drying, as the dryer can bake the smell into clothes, making it more difficult to remove.

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

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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.

	+		÷		4
+		-		+	
	-		x		2
÷		x		x	
	-		x		6
3		6		10	

1 2 2 4 5 6 7 8 9

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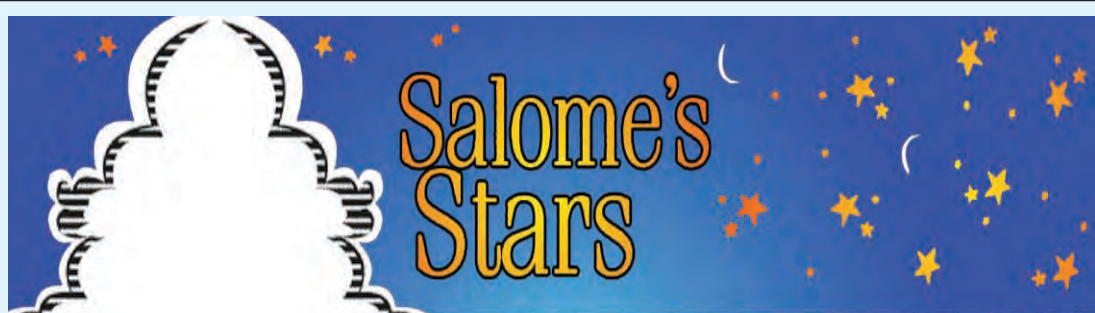
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Just Like Cats & Dogs

by Dave T. Phipps



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ARIES (March 21 to April 19) The new year holds promise for all you Lambs who know how to take advantage of the opportunities out there. The key is keeping a positive attitude.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20) Over the course of this new year, you beautiful Bovines will continue bulldozing the barriers that stand between you and the success of your long-term plans.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20) The new year kicks off with a major decision about a job change that could involve a lot of travel. The choice you make could influence other decisions down the line.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22) Familial relationships continue to have a strong influence on whatever long-term decisions you make involving both your career and your personal life.

LEO (July 23 to August 22) Any decisions that you put off making last year should be confronted and dealt with as soon as possible. You need to clear away the past and make room for the future.

VIRGO (August 23 to September 22) Last year's disappointments are history. Expect to see more opportunities opening up and waiting for you to use them to your advantage.

LIBRA (September 23 to October 22) You still have some trouble spots lingering from last year. Resolve them so that you can move on to tackle more rewarding situations.

SCORPIO (October 23 to November 21) Developments in the year ahead can be more challenging than you had expected, but the rewards will be well worth your efforts.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22 to December 21) You are the Philosopher of the Zodiac, and your wisdom will go a long way in helping you deal with the challenges of the upcoming year.

CAPRICORN (December 22 to January 19) Take stock of what you propose to do in the new year and get started as soon as possible. On another note, last year's critics turn into this year's admirers.

AQUARIUS (January 20 to February 18) This year, the typically gentle Water Bearer can reveal a hidden streak of steel that few people suspected you had; they will be surprised to see how you use it.

PISCES (February 19 to March 20) Although new friends open up different social vistas, your penchant for privacy is still strong and allows you the quiet time you need to indulge in your creative gifts.

Born this Week

You have deep reservoirs of strength that give you extraordinary staying power amid the most difficult conditions.

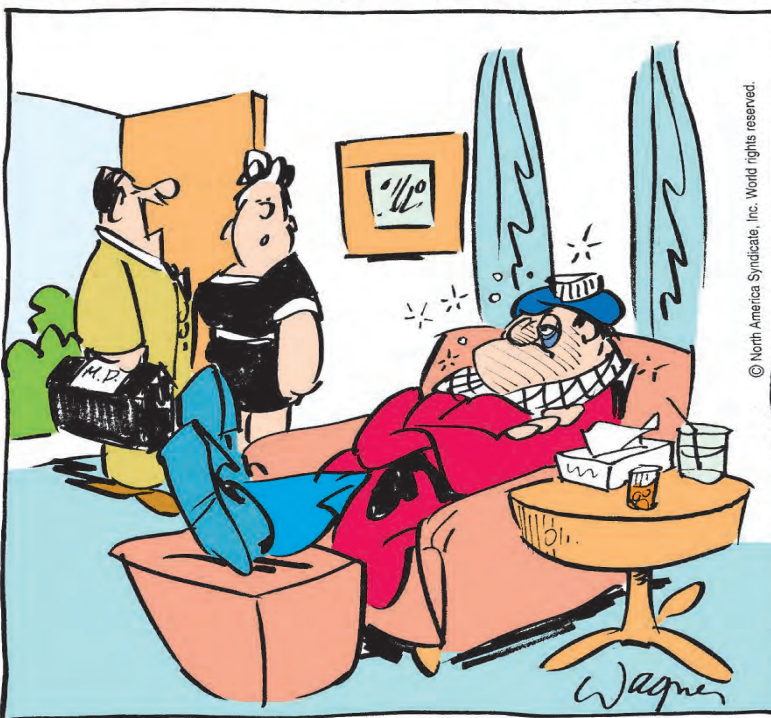
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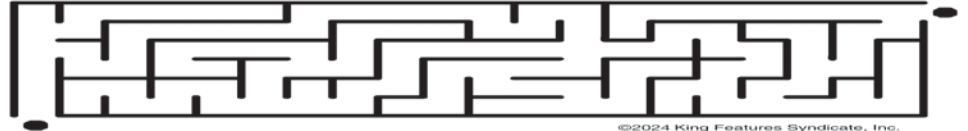


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"He has a few good years left if he skips New Year's Eves."

FUN PAGES

Kids' Maze



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TIGER

by BUD BLAKE



TRIVIA TEST

By Fifi Rodriguez

1. **GENERAL KNOWLEDGE:** When is Three King's Day celebrated typically? 2. **TELEVISION:** In the drama series "Mad Men," what product is presumed to be Don Draper's last advertisement? 3. **GEOGRAPHY:** What is a chain or collection of islands called? 4. **MOVIES:** To which city is the McCallister family traveling in the holiday classic "Home Alone"? 5. **LEGAL:** What is a moot court? 6. **LITERATURE:** What is the name of the heroine in "The Scarlet Letter"? 7. **FOOD & DRINK:** What kind of nut is used in marzipan? 8. **MUSIC:** What is the gift on the 11th day in the song "The Twelve Days of Christmas"? 9. **SCIENCE:** How much of the Earth's surface is covered with water? 10. **HISTORY:** What are the two Japanese cities that the United States hit with atomic bombs in WWII?

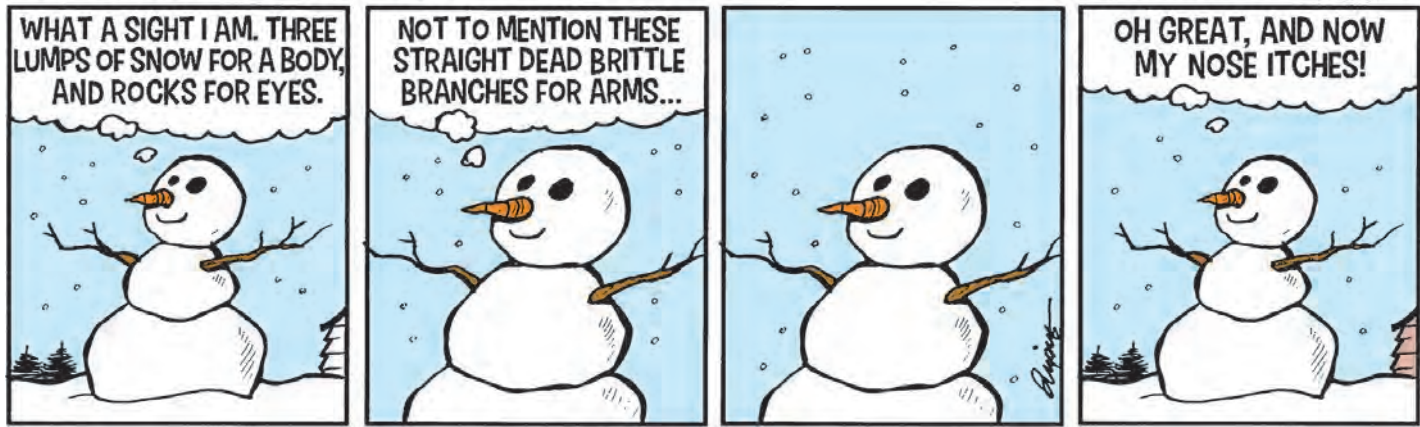
10. Hiroshima and Nagasaki.
9. Almost 71%.
8. 11 pipes piping.
7. Almond.
6. Hester Prynne.
5. A simulated court to give law students a chance to practice what they have learned.
4. Paris, France.
3. An archipelago.
2. Coca-Cola.
1. Jan. 6, the 12th day of Christmas.

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Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps



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SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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

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The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



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Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas



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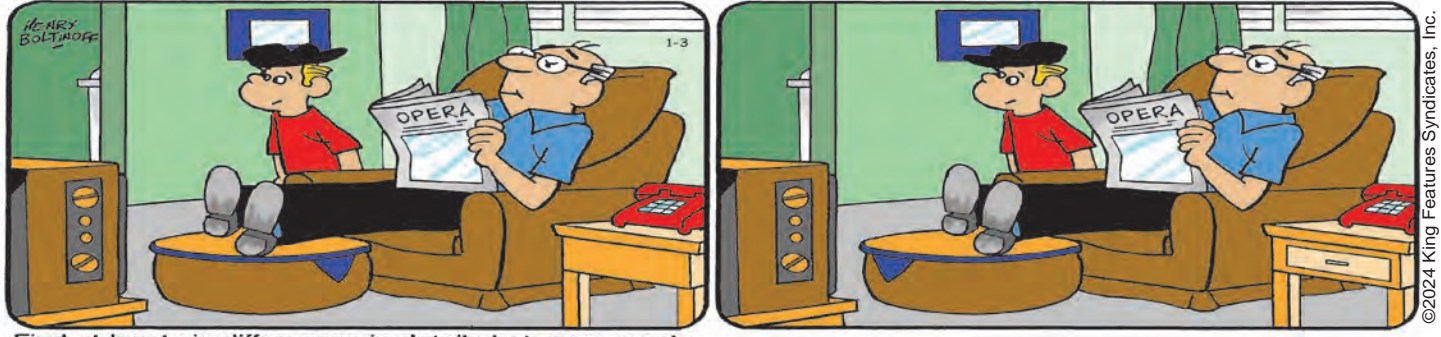
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HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.
Differences: 1. Ottoman is turned. 2. Drawer is added. 3. Phone is added. 4. Legs are shorter. 5. Hat is turned around. 6. Boy is moved.

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MAGIC MAZE • BOWL GAMES

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 Z W U R P M J H E C Z X U S Q
 H N L J G Y E C Z X H V K T R
 A P N S L J T H Y E C C C A Y
 W T W S U P E R B O W L A V T
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Find the listed words in the diagram. They run in all directions forward, backward, up, down and diagonally
 Unlisted clue hint: 50TH STATE

- Citrus
- Cotton
- Fiesta
- Gator
- Holiday
- Independence
- Liberty
- Military
- Orange
- Outback
- Peach
- Rose
- Sugar
- Sun
- Super Bowl

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FUN PAGES

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The Flatlander's Day Parade & Fair Coming Saturday, May 18

After last year's cancelation of the Flatlander's Day Parade, people have been working hard to bring it back. Among others, the Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce and Supervisor Wamhoff are on track to make it the success it was. SEMCU will be holding a Charity Booth "Yard Sale" at the Parade's Fair to raise money for our schools, Senior Center and U.S. Veterans in Southeast Madera.

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SEM CU's next meeting is Monday, February 19 at 6 p.m.

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You may come by 37398 Berkshire Dr., Madera Ranchos or participate online by going to: WWW.SEMCU.ORG for the link or participate by calling on your phone to 669-900-6833 and enter meeting ID# 836-3242-4343 with access code 854221.

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