

# The Ranchos Independent



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The Official Publication of Southeastern Madera County

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Photo by John Glueck

An eager group of diners await the main course at the Fourth Annual Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce Crab Feed at Liberty High School.

## Chamber Feeds Ranchos Again

For the fourth year in a row, the Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce provided the Ranchos with all the crab it could eat at the Chamber Crab Feed held Saturday, Mar. 3 at Liberty High.

In addition to the great food and fellowship there were also live and silent auctions. In all, the event raised over \$18,000 for the Chamber.

Get an eyeful of the whole event on page 9.

## Supervisors Take \$3.2M from Ranchos Roads



*"We have to work together. If we continually say 'how are we going to get paid back?' this is ridiculous."*

- Supervisor Ronn Domenici

*"We need the project as soon as possible."*

- Supervisor Max Rodriguez said.



*Without opening the item for public comment, Supervisor Vern Moss asked for a motion to transfer \$3.2 million.*



By Randy Bailey

A controversial move by the Madera County Board of Supervisors has resulted in the transfer of \$3.2 million of Measure A road funds from the unincorporated areas of the county to build a bridge across Highway 99 for a City of Madera developer.

At the Feb. 27 Board of Supervisors meeting, Supervisor Ronn Domenici, citing a "time sensitive" situation, introduced an off-agenda item seeking to transfer the \$3.2 million. Immediately, Supervisor Frank Bigelow questioned the appropriateness of the motion, suggesting that an item of this size should be placed on the agenda where it could be discussed in an open forum complete with public comment and testimony from experts in the field. "Representatives from the Madera County

Transportation Commission did not know it was on the agenda and were not present at the meeting," Bigelow said.

The vote was "time sensitive" because of an emergency presentation made by the City of Madera stating it needed the \$3.2 million dollars to leverage \$7.6 million more dollars from the California Transportation Commission to build an overpass at Ellis Avenue in Madera. Bigelow pointed out that District 5, Tom Wheeler's district, was already short of transportation funds because it was budgeted only \$5 million - the least of all of the districts - and had already loaned other funds to District 1 for Highway 41 expansion. Of the money generated by Measure A, Bigelow said that 60 percent had already been spent on the City of Madera projects alone.

Bigelow stated that, the inappropriateness of the motion notwithstanding, he just wanted to know how it was going to get paid back, citing that in his area "... folks have waited the entire gamut of the 19 years of Measure A. When is it their turn? When do we stop raiding from one area to give to another area?"

"We have to work together. If we continually say 'how are we going to get paid back?' ... this is ridiculous," said Domenici.

Madera City Councilman Gary Svanda said that county residents should trust the City of Madera to work with them in future projects.

Supervisors Domenici, Max Rodriguez and Vern Moss voted in favor of the transfer. Bigelow's office has already received complaints and the plot thickens.



Photo by John Glueck

## "Kids Day" in the Ranchos

On a rainy morning before the sun even had a chance to rise on Tuesday, March 20, Avenue 12 at Loren Way had Station 19 firefighters and their families selling copies of the Fresno Bee to help raise funds for Children's Hospital Central California. This was the 20th year of the "Kid's Day" event and was duplicated

all over the Central Valley, raising over \$400,000. The Ranchos firefighters sold over 500 copies of the paper at \$1 each with 50 cents of each sale going to the hospital.

In all, over 4,000 volunteers surpassed their goal of \$360,000 for the annual event sponsored by the Bee and ABC30.

## Whyman Named Chamber 2006 Volunteer of the Year

At the Fourth Annual Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce Crab Feed held Saturday, March 6, Chamber member Bill Whyman was left speechless when he was awarded the 2006 Volunteer of the Year Award. Bill asked the Ranchos Independent if he could say a few words in acceptance of the award.

When I heard my name called as the recipient of the "Volunteer of the Year" at the Crab Feed I was totally unprepared. I had no idea I was even in the running for the award. Because of this I was totally speechless. I would like to say something now.

Thank you for recognizing and selecting me as the recipient of the Volunteer of the Year award. When I think of the number of volunteers in the Ranchos I realize I am in good company. Every organization in the Ranchos is run by volunteers, all of whom could qualify for this award. This includes the Chamber, Kiwanis, Friends of the Ranchos Library, Seniors and many other school and sports groups. Without volunteers none would succeed. I help because I think it's the right thing to do, not to win an award; that was a bonus that I truly appreciate. Recognition is great.

I wish there were a way to recognize all volunteers, they are the "oil" that keeps the Ranchos organizations running smoothly. But there is always room for more volunteers. It will give you a feeling of accomplishment and pride. I encourage those who would like to help to go to your favorite group and lend them some of your time and expertise. Your cost is low, but your personal feeling of accomplishment will be high.

I accept this award on behalf of all volunteers in the Ranchos. The recognition by my peers means a lot to me. Thank you.

Bill Whyman  
Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce 2006 Volunteer of the Year



Bill Whyman (left) received the Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce 2006 Volunteer of the Year Award from Past President Steve Krueger at the Fourth Annual Chamber Crab Feed held March 3 at Liberty High to raise funds for the Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce.

**Flatlander Parade Volunteers**  
There's going to be an organizational meeting  
**WEDNESDAY, APR. 4**  
**6:30 P.M.**  
at the Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce office  
call **645-4001**

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On Saturday evening, March 24, 2007 The Third Annual  
**"The Night The Stars Come Out"**  
 Annual Dinner Gala  
 Was held at Birdstone Winery.

**The Foundation Proudly Honored their 2007 STARS**

Golden Valley Unified STAR Educator Awards

- Mrs. Melissa Locke – Liberty High School
- Mrs. Wendy Woods – Webster Elementary School
- Ms. Kristi Fisher – District Office

Golden Valley Unified STAR Service Awards

- Mrs. Cheri Adams – Sierra View Elementary School
- Mr. Jesus Garcia – District Maintenance

In addition to the STAR Awards, Foundation Grants were presented to teachers for purposes of funding well defined educational projects.

- Kandace Osborn – Sierra View Elementary School
- Jeremy Norris – Ranchos Middle School
- Nichole Ullrich – Ranchos Middle School
- Ted Januse – Ranchos Middle School
- Ruben Iniguez/Arris White – Ranchos Middle School

**CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL AWARD WINNERS AND GRANT RECIPIENTS.**



Amanda Hillis  
Permanent Makeup



Linda Ibarra  
Stylist



Danielle Pasma  
Massage Therapist



Monica Fernandes  
Administrative Assistant



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# 2007 Flatlander's Day

Parade Day: May 5, 2007

Group  Individual  Business

Group or Business Name \_\_\_\_\_

Individual entry or responsible person's name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Theme of Entry: \_\_\_\_\_

Will youngsters walk with the entry?  Yes  No  
 Approx. number of participants \_\_\_\_\_ Approx. length \_\_\_\_\_ ft.

**Entry Category (select ONE which most closely suits your entry):**

- Horses (Single)  Horses (Group) Explain: \_\_\_\_\_
- Floats (Band) Name: \_\_\_\_\_
- Floats (Non-profit) Name: \_\_\_\_\_
- Floats (Business) Name: \_\_\_\_\_
- Floats (Other) Name: \_\_\_\_\_
- Children's Groups Name: \_\_\_\_\_
- Dance Groups Name: \_\_\_\_\_
- Single Entry (Children) Name: \_\_\_\_\_
- Single Entry (Adult) Name: \_\_\_\_\_
- Novelty Name: \_\_\_\_\_
- Additional information: \_\_\_\_\_

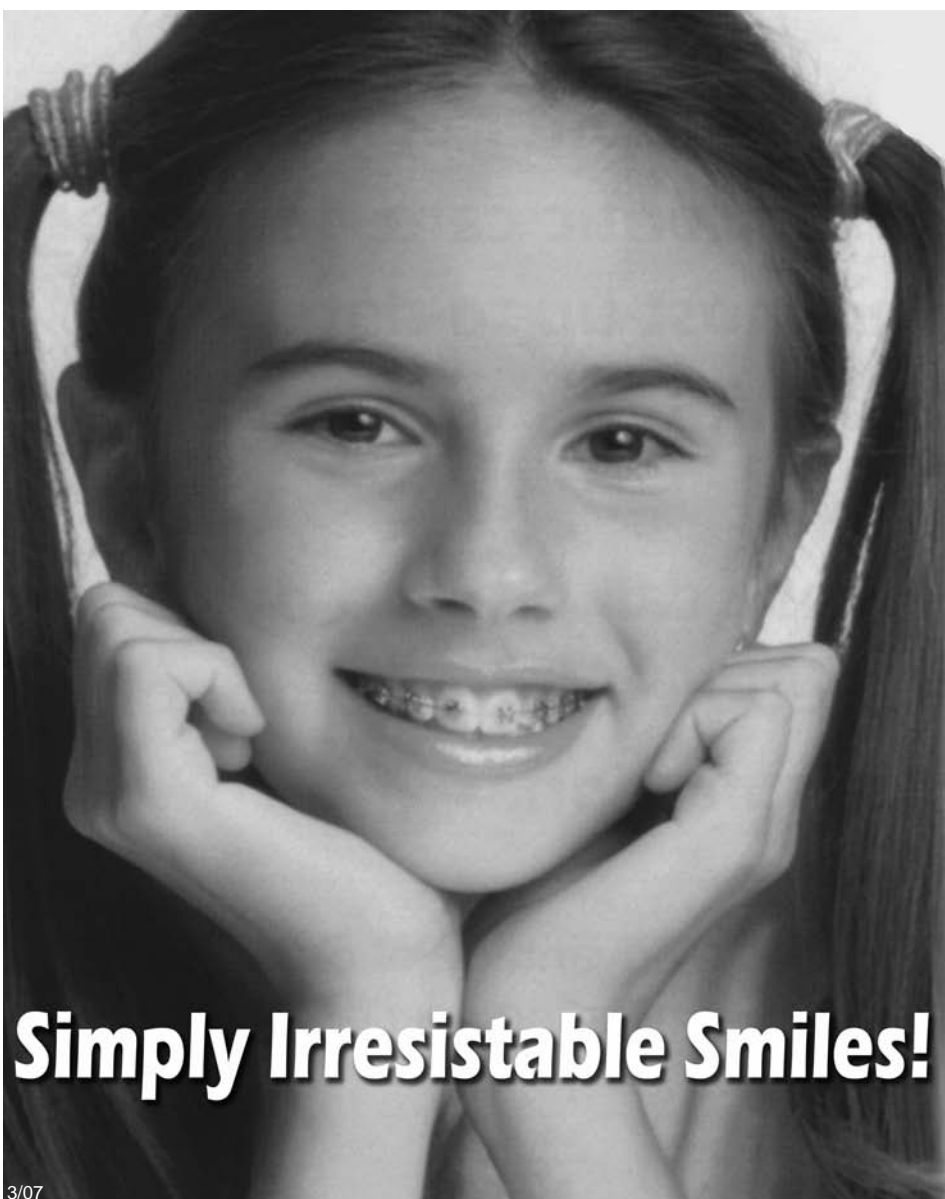
Parade begins at 10 a.m. Sharp!  
 Registration of entries begins at 8:30 a.m.  
 Parade route: Topper along Ave. 12 to Kensington

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

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Bring or mail this form by **April 26** to: **Golden Valley Chamber 37167 Ave. 12 Ste. 5C • Madera, CA 93636** or call **645-4001**

Parade Sponsored by the Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce, Ranchos Kiwanis and Friends of the Ranchos Library.



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## The Bookshelf

# Poll a Success, Now Get Involved

By Ellen Mester

Wow! We have gotten a tremendous response from our "Help Us Build a Library" survey! Ninety-nine percent have been positive. Thanks to all of you for taking the time to respond. If you didn't receive a survey in your last issue of The Ranchos Independent, stop by the library or call us at 645-1214 and we will mail one to you. We want your opinion and we need to know how often you use the library, what value you place on library materials and what services you'd like to be available to you in a new library. This is the first important step that the New Library Planning Committee must take to get the ball rolling. If you'd like to be a part of this exciting process contact the library to find out when the next meeting is. Everyone is welcome.

Flatlander's Day Parade and Craft Show is definitely on schedule for May 5 this year. Thanks to all the people who came forward to volunteer; it looks like we will have all our bases covered. The Kiwanis will be cooking the tri-tip this year. We still need to hear from the school clubs who want to sell popcorn, cotton candy, hot dogs, etc. Call us for an application. We also have some new craft sellers and many of the old favorites signing up. For Parade information call the Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce at 645-4001. We hope to get all the schools and community organizations in the parade. Overall we are looking forward to a fantastic Flatlander's this year!

Here's another event to keep in mind: The Ranchos Library Summer Reading Program entitled, Get a Clue @ the Library. The theme this year is mystery solving. We will have great books to read, reading logs, contests, puzzles, prizes, entertainment, and lots of fun each week. The kick-off night will be June 21. Watch for more details in the next few months.

Reminders: Monday Story Time is 11 a.m. with Mrs. Anderson. The Friends of the Library meet the first Thursday of every month at 7 p.m. Everyone is welcome.

TAX FORMS are still available! We can also print any of the other tax forms for you free of charge.

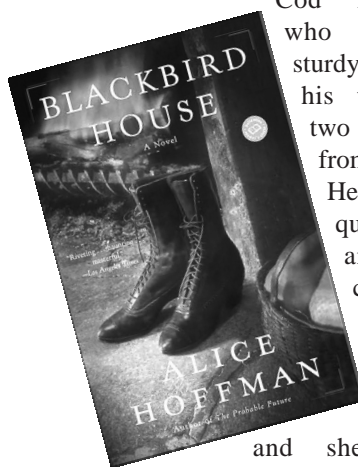
### Book Recommendations

**Adult Fiction: *The Kite Runner* written by Khaled Hosseini.** This book has been on the best-seller list for a couple of years because it is not only well-written but it is such a moving story. Amir and his father Baba live in an affluent Pashtun neighborhood in Kabul, Afghanistan in the 1970's when times are good or at least better than what they have become. They have two servants, Ali and his son, Hassan, who live in a hut in the backyard. Ali and Hassan are Hazaras, a Mongolian-decent tribe who are Shiite Muslims. The Pashtuns are Sunni Muslims who have oppressed the Shia's for generations.

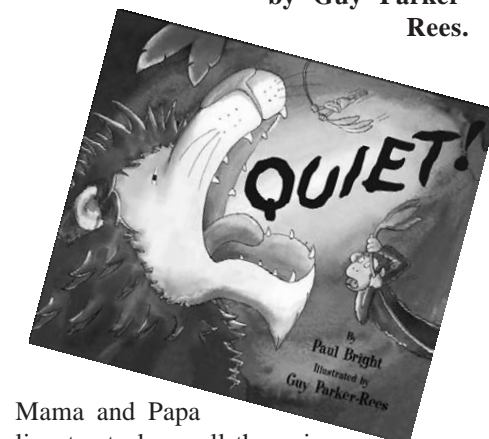
Despite their different social strata, the two boys are best friends and often play together. When Amir goes to school, Hassan helps

his father with the household chores. The servant Hassan is brave, loyal, modest and kind. The privileged Amir is cowardly and jealous of any attention he receives from Baba. The different personalities come to the forefront in a defining moment that causes their peaceful home to crumble. Shortly afterward the whole country erupts in turmoil as first the Russians then the Taliban seize control. Wracked with guilt, Amir longs for redemption as he grows up in the U.S. He finally gets his opportunity years later when a phone call from an old friend asks for his help. This compelling story gives real insight into the cultural problems and continued violence in Afghanistan from the personal perspective of the author. It may be fiction but it has a ring of truth to it in the characters and the bleak view of the struggle for control.

**Adult Fiction: *The Blackbird House* by Alice Hoffman.** The story begins with John Hadley, an eighteenth century Cape Cod fisherman who builds a sturdy house for his wife and two sons away from the sea. He wants to quit fishing and grow corn and turnips, raise milk cows and sheep. His youngest son Isaac has a pet blackbird that rides in his pocket. John's wife, Coral, begs her husband not to take the boys in the boat, but alas he does and all are lost at sea including Isaac's blackbird. For a year, Coral would not believe that her family was gone. Then one spring day a blackbird appears and taps at her door. Despite the fact that the bird is now completely white, Coral knows it's Isaac's bird and she knows at last that they are truly gone. Each chapter that follows is another story in the same house decades later with a different family and different problems. The white blackbird is always present just at a pivotal moment in the family's lives. Beautifully crafted to grab your heart, these stories will remind you of the resilience of human life.

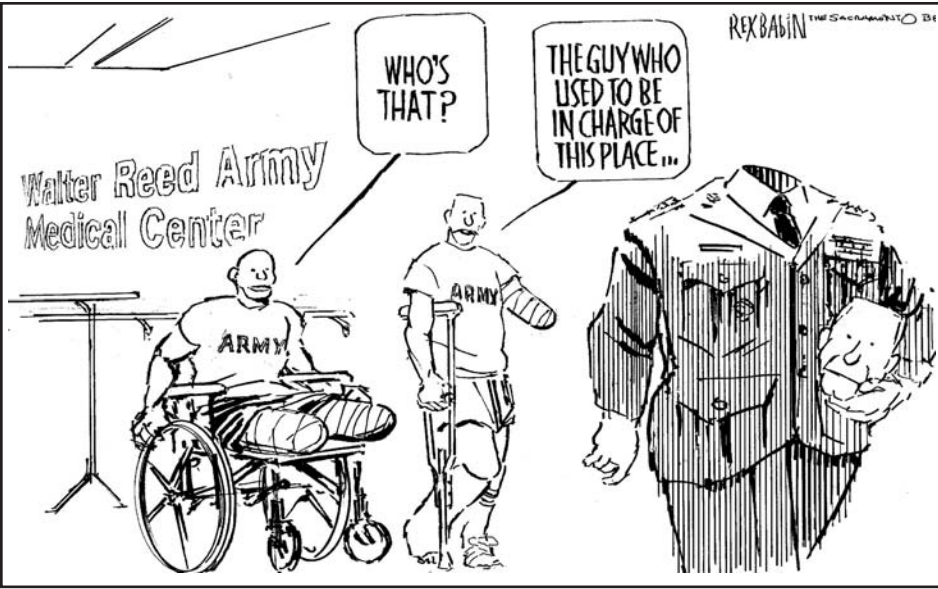


**Juvenile Picture Book: *Quiet* by Paul Bright and illustrated by Guy Parker-Rees.**



Mama and Papa lion try to keep all the animals in the jungle quiet so baby Leo can have his nap. Papa gets angry with all the squawking, chirping, swooping and splashing that the other animals make so he threatens to gobble up the first one who wakes up baby Leo. The beautiful illustrations and the not-so-surprising ending make this a fun book to read to small children.

Check out these books and more at the library and remember your library card ... don't leave home without it!



Editorial

# Feel the Gun in Your Back? It's Just the Board of Supervisors

I've talked before about the importance of the Ranchos becoming an autonomous unit. Incorporating. The "town" of Madera Ranchos, California. Whatever. And the usual response I get is, "We can't do that" or "We looked into that once and it won't work." Mostly I get, "Why?"

Here's why.

On Tuesday, Feb. 27 the Madera County Board of Supervisors decided they knew what was better to do with a chunk of money earmarked for the unincorporated parts of the county (that's US) and took \$3.2 million dollars of Measure A money because they needed a bridge over Highway 99 for a new development that was a little land locked. Rather than have the City of Madera hold the developer's feet to the fire and make them pick up the tab (like everyone is expecting Castle & Cooke to do for every aspect of Gateway Village), instead they'll just take money from us for their project and then promise to pay it back with a wink and a smile. Why go out and work for the money when you can just take it?

The problem is that the Board of Supervisors is a stacked deck. There's our Supervisor, Frank Bigelow, and the mountains' representative, Tom Wheeler, but they're always going to be outgunned by the representatives for the City of Madera, namely Ronn Domenici, Max Rodriguez and Chowchilla's Vern Moss.

This taking of \$3.2 million is a classic example. You would think an expenditure of that size, involving transferring of funds from one or two districts to another, would at least involve making it an agenda item at the Board of Supervisor's meeting. I know I just live in the Ranchos, but \$3.2 million sure SEEMS like a lot of money to me. You would

think there would be opportunity for public debate, possibly from the people on Avenue 7 or up on Road 415 who have been waiting forever for it to be their turn to get the county to finally fix their roads with these funds that had been promised to them.

Nope.

Snuck into the Feb. 27 meeting as a "time sensitive" matter, the only thing that came to light that day was just how much more important City of Madera growth and infrastructure are than us. "Time sensitive"? You mean they build a development and then all of a sudden say, "Oops - I guess we need a bridge to get in and out of here"?

And in the spirit of cooperation, Bigelow said that he understood transferring dollars back and forth between areas of the county where the need is greatest, he just wants to know when and how HIS area is going to get paid back. To this Supervisor Domenici said, "We have to work together. If we continually say 'how are we going to get paid back?' this is ridiculous."

Madera City Councilman Gary Svanda explained that it was all just a matter of trust and that the Board should simply trust that the council would pay back the county areas in the future. Sometime. Maybe. Nudge nudge, wink wink.

And there you have it.

It's ridiculous that the unincorporated areas should even question what the REAL parts of the county are doing. Anyway, just trust them to do the right thing and everything will be OK.

For them.

I've said it before and I'll say it until I die: If you don't get what you want, you get what you deserve.

### Random Notes

I hate to start off on a sad note, but sometimes you just have to. I don't know about you but I really enjoyed Woody Laughnan's "Olde Cowboy" column in the Ranchos Independent. It literally made me laugh out loud on more than one occasion. It seems that his beloved wife has lost a long battle with cancer. I had no way of knowing that when I contacted him about more Cowboy articles. "I just don't feel funny right now," was all he said. I understand. He said he may start writing when he feels it again. Our prayers are with him.

I try to be accurate but sometime the runner stumbles. In last month's Ranchos Independent I said that the Taxpayers Association of Madera County voted unanimously to recommend Castle & Cooke accept whatever the School District was offering. That's not exactly correct. They voted that Castle & Cooke accept the terms if they were reasonable so that the development would not be slowed down. Sorry.

Those of you who expressed an interest in helping with the Flatlander's Day Parade need to show up at a meeting at the Chamber office at 37167 Ave. 12 #5C on Wednesday, April 4 at 6:30 p.m. It will all be explained to you at that time. PLEASE don't forget - the parade is resting on its volunteers. Call 645-4001 if you have any questions.

I was only able to include a handful of pictures from the Chamber Crab Feed in this month's issue of the Ranchos Independent. If you want to see more, got to [www.theranchos.com](http://www.theranchos.com).

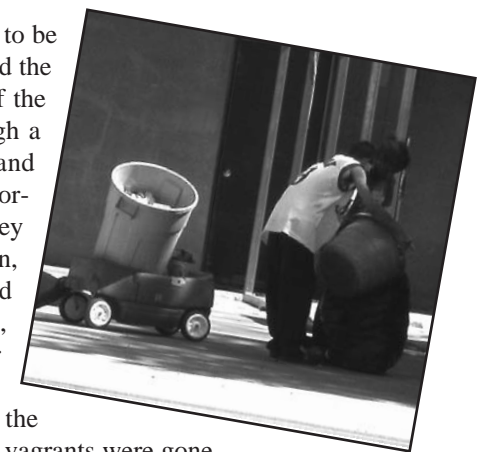
There's a link on the front page that will take you to tons of photos. That's also where you can find archives of the Ranchos Independent back to April of 2006. The Website is a great resource for Ranchos folks and we need to take advantage of it.

I got a report last week that what appeared to be vagrants were setting up a tent and living behind the homes around Road 37 and Cloverleaf. One of the neighbors over there caught them going through a neighbor's trash looking for recyclables and pulling a wagon that belonged to some neighborhood children. When confronted about what they were doing there and where they got the wagon, they replied that the neighbor said they could have them. Well, this neighbor didn't buy it, went and knocked on the other neighbor's door to see if the story checked out and guess who wasn't even home - you guessed it. He called the Sheriff's Department but when they arrived the vagrants were gone.

A few days later he saw them again and took pictures while calling the Sheriff but can you guess what happened? Yep - gone by the time they arrived. They might be harmless but they're obviously not truthful so keep your eyes open. It appears to be a young guy and girl with a third guy who's reported to be huge.

Finally, I gotta' mention the Ranchos/Hills Seniors' biggest event of the year. I'm talking about their 15th Annual Home and Garden Festival on Saturday, April 7 from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. They are pulling out all the stops this year. They are featuring a craft show, baked goods, food vendors, plants, trees, a boutique, a raffle, merchandise from the Treasure House and there's even more! If you get there between 6:30 and 9:30 a.m. they're offering a biscuit and gravy breakfast for only \$5. I can think of few things that will motivate me in the morning like biscuits and gravy can.

This even has become a Ranchos tradition and you need to check it out on their big 15 anniversary. See you there.



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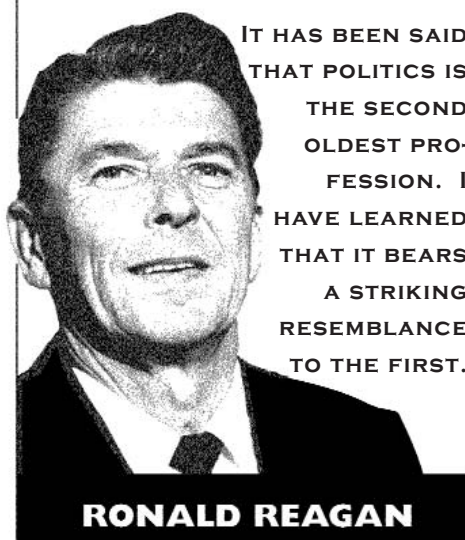
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**Randy Bailey**..... Editor **559-645-0634**  
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## THE RAY GUN



IT HAS BEEN SAID THAT POLITICS IS THE SECOND OLDEST PROFESSION. I HAVE LEARNED THAT IT BEARS A STRIKING RESEMBLANCE TO THE FIRST.

**RONALD REAGAN**

## Letters

Dear Editor:

I have been picking up grandchildren from Sierra View for the past 11 years and from Liberty High for three years, and each year I get more frustrated than the year before.

#### Sierra View Elementary

Mr. Tefft, I understand you are a wonderful principal, well-liked by everyone and doing a great job with the children and parents but I think you have a lot to be desired as a traffic controller. Why do you allow cars to park in the driveway waiting for their children to get out of school? I have seen cars, trucks and vans pull into the driveway just after 2 p.m. and park themselves awaiting the arrival of their children at 2:30. This seriously jeopardizes the lives of those children who have to cross the driveway to get to their parent's autos. I've seen cars slam on brakes as they were trying to pass these autos when a child darts out to go around these parked cars. I don't like to compare people – BUT when Mr. Foster was there, he didn't allow the parking in the driveway. The vice principal, Mrs. Kelly, substituted for Mr. Foster occasionally and she didn't put up with anything. I can still remember her looking like a New York City traffic cop pointing her finger and demanding, "Find a parking space, or go around – no parking in the drive way!" I loved it and it was much, much safer.

Recently, I pulled out of the parking lot wanting to go north on Paula, but there were 12 (yes, 12) cars waiting to get into the lot to pick up their children all because of illegally parked cars in the driveway! Isn't that a traffic hazard and, more importantly, a safety hazard?

I can't tell you how many cars I have seen parking illegally in the NO PARKING zone (both in front of the school and around

on the south end) in – or parallel to – the Handicapped parking spots. I would bet if you had a \$50 traffic fine for each of these – just this year – you would have enough money to stock two or three class rooms with supplies to last the balance of the year.

When I first started picking up my grandchildren, I parked in the lot in front of the school. However, with all the cars parked in the driveway it became such a hassle trying to back out that I started parking on the south side but there are so few empty spots there. I've even considered parking up in front of the Multi-Purpose building (with a number of other parents) but that can be asking for trouble as the children have to cross the trouble parking lot to get up to the Multi-Purpose parking lot. Drivers come around the corner in front of the office like a bat out of kingdom come. There is a woman that drives a minivan that I've seen on two occasions driving so fast around that corner that she had to slam on her brakes to keep from hitting someone.

#### Liberty High School

My first question is: "Who is the idiot that designed and approved the circle drive around the front of the school?" What a traffic jam that can be! I can't believe that people would double park there, waiting for their children – thus holding up traffic behind them – including buses trying to get to the middle school. Or parking in front of the fire hydrant, causing buses to circle wide, or wait until the vehicle moves so it can continue around. Why isn't that part of the sidewalk painted red? I was sitting in

the parking lot waiting for my grandson watching these "adults" and saw a woman double park her SUV and get out and go into the office! A bus had to wait until she came out and drive off. Several times I've seen buses wait for people to move before they can get through. How frustrating that must be for them. I'm sure they have air horns on their buses and I'm waiting for the day that they use them. THAT would get traffic moving!

Now, for the student parking lot. If I can get a space in the circle I try to get there as the lot is a nightmare. I know the students are anxious to get going, BUT they

drive in those lots like they are the only ones there. As they drive east getting out of the lot, there is usually a long line of vehicles waiting their turn to get out and usually they do a good job, but there have been a couple of incidents that should be addressed.

Not long ago, I saw a young man in an older pickup roar about 25 mph to the front of that line and force his vehicle into line so he could get out before anyone else. Twice I have seen cars back into each other getting out of their spaces. The first one, a few weeks ago was two students. After their cars hit, the drivers got out and looked at the damage, laughed, got back into their cars and drove off. Friday, I was in the lot waiting (no spots available in the circle) when a woman in a van whose daughter had just gotten in started backing out. At the same time a young man got into his vehicle behind her and without looking started backing out and you guessed it – wham! They both got

out and surveyed the damage which was slight, but the kid acted like it was the woman's fault when in fact it was his. I'd like to have gotten out and given that kid a piece of my mind but I knew better.

In the parking lot directly in front of the theatre, there are two or three handicap parking spots and there are always several cars that park in front of them waiting for their students. Every time I see them parked there, I wish they could be fined and the school could collect the money.

#### Board of Trustees

I invite you, since you are responsible for our students, to come to the parking lot, arriving about 2 p.m. at Sierra View and before 3 p.m. at Liberty High and observe for yourself the problems as I have seen them.

I hope you can and will do something about this, but thank you for letting me vent. My main question through all of this is not only the safety of our children, but what are we teaching them? If they see us parking illegally in the lot, in the No Parking space or blocking a handicap spot – are we telling them it is ok?

When I told the boys I was going to write a letter to you about the problems as I saw them, they asked me not to tell my name as they were afraid of getting in trouble from the principals or teachers. So to honor their wishes I won't, but believe me, this is no joke.

I'm sending a copy of this letter to the Madera County Sheriff's department and the Madera office of the California Highway Patrol. I realize they probably don't have jurisdiction on the school sites, but I would bet that when, (not if) something happens, one or both will be called.

*Name Withheld Upon Request  
Madera Ranchos*

Please see **LETTERS** on P. 14

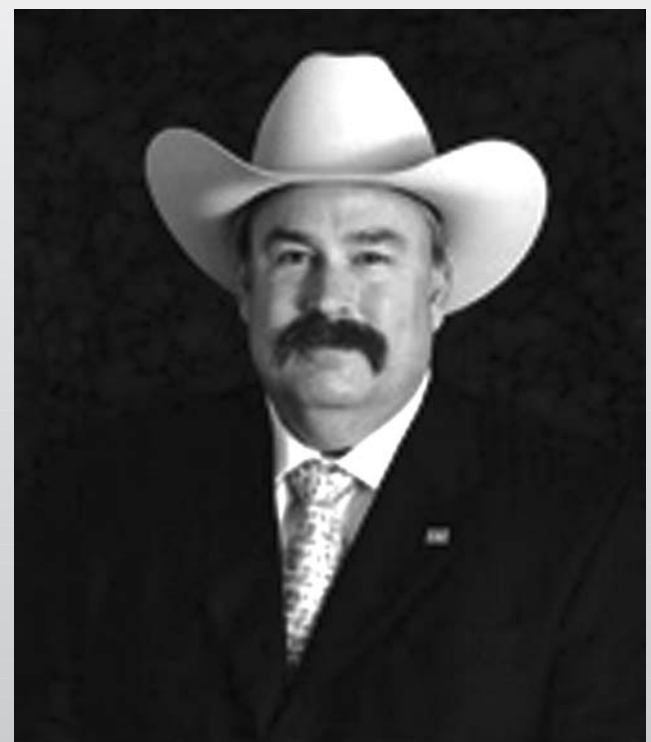
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# The Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce Invites you to a **TOWN HALL MEETING**

with Guest Speaker

**Madera County  
District #1 Supervisor  
Frank Bigelow**

This will be Frank's first community meeting of the year.  
Please join us for an interesting and informative evening!



3/07

**Wednesday Evening, April 25 at 7 p.m.**

**Ranchos/Hills Seniors Center • 37330 Berkshire, Madera Ranchos  
Refreshments • Call 645-4001 for More Information**

# RANCHOS NEWS IN BRIEF

## LHS Students Earn Medals at State Academic Decathlon

Liberty High had two students, Brittney Bergan and Dustin Moses, earn individual medals at the California Academic Decathlon held in Los Angeles March 15-18. On the Liberty High Decathlon Team, Hannah Aschcraft was the top scoring member. The team is coached by Trent Wilson who is coaching for the first time. The team members are Hanna Aschcraft, Lilian Gong, Kayla Hodges, Ezequiel Lihosit, Dustin Moses, Nicole Negrete, Britney Neufeld, Brandon Schlueter and Serena Walker.

## Local Businesses Support School Association's "It's All Here" Campaign

Local businesses are enthusiastically supporting Madera County School Boards Association's "It's All Here!" campaign. The Real Estate Network, Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce, Wilkins Enterprises, Citizens Business Bank, Edward Campbell and Associates, Bresee Properties, Continental Realty, Jerry Eddings Realtors, North Fork Rancheria, Madera Unified and Charles Diaz Trucking are a few of the companies partnering with Madera County School Boards Association.

"It's All Here" campaign was launched in 2005 to showcase schools throughout Madera County. "It is a known fact that great schools create strong communities and strong communities help establish bright futures for all," MCSBA President Mona Diaz said.

If your business would like to join in promoting Madera County Schools, contact the Association President Mona Diaz at monadiaz@earthlink.net or visit its Website at www.maderacountyschools.org.

## Liberty High Sober Graduation

Liberty High School's Third Sober Grad Night is coming May 31. Sponsored by our local CHP and the Sober Grad Committee, it is designed as an incentive to help keep the graduates at a safe party away from the hazards of the roads on graduation night by offering dancing, jousting, Velcro wall, poker, blackjack and other activities.

Sober Grad needs donations for the 2007 event and they can be taken directly to Liberty High or you can contact Kathy Gorman, Committee Chairperson, at 645-0262 for more information.

## Help Our Ranchos Farmers March 19 - 30

Sierra View, Webster, Ranchos Middle, Liberty High and Educational Options have joined forces with the Madera Farm Bureau to help our valley citrus workers by raising \$5000 in donations of non-perishable food items and cash or checks. All money raised and/or food donated will go directly to help farm workers get through this rough time.

All donations (made out to Foundation for Golden Valley Schools) can be sent to your child's school site during the weeks of March 19 - 30. Mark on the memo line "Ranchos Citrus Fundraiser".

Pizza Factory will be holding a fundraiser on Thursday, March 29 from 5-9 p.m. and have offered to donate 50 percent of the profits for Thursday night's income to this cause.

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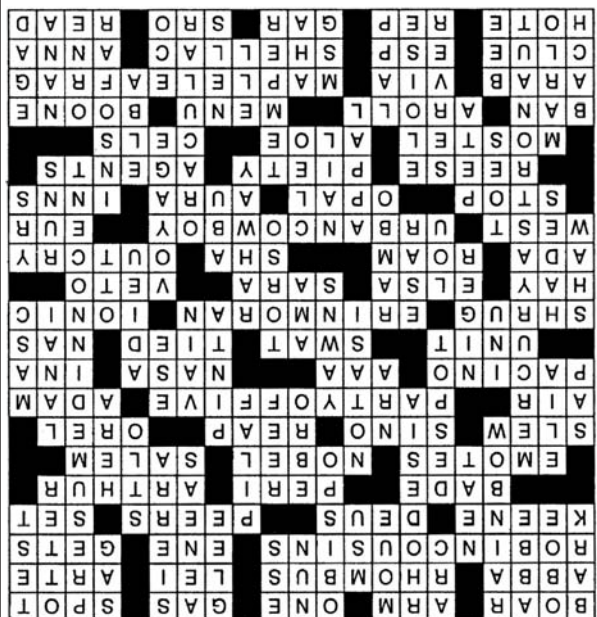
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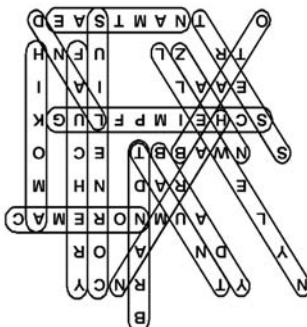
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## Puzzle Answers



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

### SUDOKU



### MAGIC MAZE

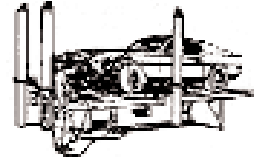
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3/07

*The Stock Report*

**Community Helps GV School Board**

By Audrey Stock

Hi neighbors,

This has been an exciting week at Liberty High. The Western Association Of Schools and Colleges (called WASC for short) which is a group of five principals from different areas, have been going through Liberty High with a fine-toothed comb to see if Liberty High measures up to be an accredited school. This is very important for Liberty High and the students that attend there. Parents, teachers and administrators have put together a self-study report booklet that is excellent. When Liberty High opened in 2003-04 Liberty had only 214 students in the ninth and tenth grades. In 2004-05 the eleventh grade was added and 2005-06 the twelfth grade was added and we became a real four-year high school for the first time. In 2006-07 we now have 614 students at Liberty. When Liberty High was built it was built in phases. The first phase is what you see on the campus now. Liberty was built for 600 students with the first community bond. An additional wing of classrooms was completed last year. Principal Andy Alvarado says Liberty High is built around the three "A's," which are Academics, Athletics and Activities. Parents play an integral part in the development of the school culture. Go Hawks!

There are many things going on all at the same time, sometimes it is hard to keep up with them all. My calendar is very filled with all of the meetings. As always the Golden Valley School District has reached out to the community for help to put some district pieces together. In anticipation of Golden Valley's future growth, the School Board approved the establishment of a GVUSD Citizens' Facilities Advisory Committee in October, 2006. The Committee is made up of a cross-section of local citizens. The Committee was asked to develop recommendations for the School Board that addressed design parameters for future facilities including but not limited to the following:

- Grade configurations
- School capacities
- School site acreage
- School design requirements and other related topics.

These ideas will be used to give direction and guidance for all developers in the future, with regard to the siting and development of schools and in collaborating with the development community in the financing of future school facilities. The school board hired Mr. Marshall Krupp and Dr. Roger Orazo as Facilities Consultants as facilitators to gain consensus from the committee on these items. These are the types of things that the school board needs to share with all developers that will be building houses in our school district. The Board will be con-

sidering the Committee's recommendations at the March 27 Board meeting.

In the meantime, the District is continuing to watch over and participate in the consideration of the various residential development projects that are proposed in the eastern Madera County and within the Golden Valley School District, which will have an effect on the future facilities and services offered by the District.

On Jan. 12, 2007 the School Board adopted Resolution #2006-10 which established a Bond Oversight Committee and approved its bylaws. They will provide assistance and technical support to assist the committee in their duties. Listed below are the community members who have volunteered to serve on the committee:

- Christine Reichmuth
- Linda Bresse
- Kent Ridge
- Jan DeWoody
- Marie Sell
- Brad McDonald
- Ron Osborn

Again community members have stepped forward when the School Board needed them. Thank you!

Various community members were asked to give what kind of characteristics the new superintendent for Golden Valley Unified should have. Many community people answered the call with their ideas about the kind of person we should be looking for. Also they identified many of the issues that a new superintendent will be facing. We know that the school district will continue to change in the coming years.

I want to thank all of the community members who have gotten involved to make our school district a great place to educate children. The Madera County Grand Jury toured Liberty High School and expressed the opinion that Liberty was a high school of excellent caliber. The conclusion of its 2006-07 final report stated that Golden Valley Unified should be rated as an excellent school district. Also they stated that parents whose children attend any of the schools in the district should be aware of the fact that their children are receiving an excellent education in a safe and up-to-date school system.

Mark your calendars for the Rancho Hills Senior's annual Spring and Garden Festival at the Rancho Hills Senior center on Saturday, April 7 from 6 a.m. to 1 p.m.

The Flatlanders Parade is coming on May 5. If you are going to enter the parade you need to stop by the Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce office and pick up a form. Sierra View Elementary will also have their carnival on May 5 from 4 to 6 p.m.

Hope to see you at the next school board meeting.

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# Applying School to the Real World

By Paul Savala

Teachers are a funny crowd. It's easy to see them in a very simple, caricatured manner because of their job descriptions. Math, English, Science; we view them as the purveyors of a knowledge that we once had, but quickly forgot. The teachers I had when I was in school also form my view of educators. As a student you know a teacher as a last-named lady who occupies one hour of your life and then disappear in the ether the moment you leave school grounds. But who are these people that we trust with our children's futures and livelihood?

Several local teachers allowed me into their lives this past week to talk about being a teacher, dealing with a new generation of students and the school system in the Ranchos. None of them saw this as an interview for a newspaper column, because frankly, the idea to write this didn't come to me until much later. Rather we talked openly about their jobs and what they hope to accomplish.

Student testing methods is a controversial subject. Standardized testing has been decried publicly by many teachers nationwide and these teachers largely echoed this same sentiment. Most felt that the focus on standards prevented them from going deeper with students on areas in which they struggled. In fact one teacher mentioned that at a different school district she had asked the school to break one class into two because the standards required were so far-reaching she couldn't do them justice in one year. On the other end, the teachers said their school was generally supportive of their struggles and saw it as a state problem, rather than a local administration problem.

Even though there was a consensus on standardized testing, traditional classroom testing was another matter. Some teachers felt that tests should be the primary aim of the course, with all materials directly related to test questions, but another group felt that testing was not the ideal way to assess knowledge and believed immersive projects were the way to go. The administration at one local school believes tests and projects/homework should hold roughly equal value in a student's grade. This balance is beneficial to smart children who simply don't test well, but also holds the possibility that students can pass a class based largely on effort, even if they don't truly understand the material.

On the innovation front, Liberty High School is venturing in new directions. Next year the school will run a grant-funded math program, Math In Careers Academy (MICA) that teaches math with a real-world focus. All the teachers I spoke to were excited about the program and felt that it would reap rewards for the students involved.

However, some worried that the extra material would allow less time for standardized testing prep, possibly causing test scores to suffer. And even though the students may be gaining a more in-depth knowledge of the material, those test scores may cast a negative light on the program. It's unfortunate that course descriptions have become so long that true understanding is often a luxury which few teachers can afford to teach.

The MICA program's goal of tying students to business applications is an admirable one. Take a moment to ask yourself, "Do I know how to factor an equation?" "Can I recite the dates of WW I and identify multiple causes for it?" For the great majority of our readers, the answer is a resounding "no." Children are not blind to this. They see that the topics teachers tell them are of unparalleled importance are in fact unknown by the majority of the adult population. This is why the MICA program presents such a great opportunity not just for learning but for relevance. Howard Gardner, a leading educational scholar, said the following regarding the utility of classroom courses: "What is missing, in my view, are contexts in which the deployment of [reading, writing, and arithmetic — the three R's] makes sense. Too many students do not see the three R's being used productively at home, nor do they witness their utility in school; and too few students are presented with problems, challenges, projects and opportunities that draw in a natural and productive way on these skills."

It's so easy to remove school from the "real world" adults inhabit because of the discrepancy in the skills required. Some people argue that school's true purpose is not to necessarily supply children with the knowledge they'll need in the everyday world, but to teach them the discipline of finishing what they start, building a good work ethic and functioning in a job-like environment. I agree that school should (and largely does) enforce many of these skills, but why can't we have both sides of the coin? Why can't school teach usable topics and teach these adult skills? This is in part what the MICA program attempts to do. It takes an arcane subject (geometry) and shows how its nuances and strange theorems can be utilized in real-world situations like building a house.

I applaud Liberty for stepping in a new direction and presenting a fresh view of a stale subject. Let's hope the larger picture of possibility overrides the setbacks the program may face. Support your schools, support your children, and support true understanding, because knowledge without utility is simply trivia.

Paul Savala is the owner of Math Crazy Tutoring in the Madera Ranchos.

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# FOURTH ANNUAL GOLDEN VALLEY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE "ALL-YOU-CAN-EAT" GRAB FEED



Chamber members helped out in the kitchen, seen here preparing the cake for dessert following the salad, pasta, crab and bread.



Several teenagers volunteered from Liberty High and Ranchos Middle School to help keep things running smoothly all night.



Auctioneer Larry Parker kept things moving. Here he's auctioned a plate of brownies for \$27 and then asks, "Which one did you want?"



Chamber member Nicole Lerno (left) was one of two people who kept the 50/50 ticket sales flying all night long.



The lines at the silent auction tables never let up as people kept scouting for bargains and making sure theirs was the highest bid.




Past Chamber President Steve Krueger (left) reacts to \$500 50/50 winner Andy Hart who said he was spending the money on candy.

All Photos by John Glueck

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# Mandatory Pet Spay/Neuter Law Would Impact Madera County

By D.J. Becker

*A proposed law, the Healthy Pets Act, AB 1634, would make the spaying and neutering of all cats and dogs over 4 months of age mandatory. The proposed law would carry a penalty of a \$500 fine for not spaying or neutering any dog or cat over 4 months of age and or allowing them to breed.*

## Part II of a two-part series

The emotional toll on shelter workers across the state is high. "People work in animal control because they love and care for animals," Madera County animal shelter director Kirsten Gross said. "The heart-break and the horror of putting down unwanted, healthy animals day after day is hard to bear for shelter workers."

Gross hopes this law would provide a better way to get people to realize how important an issue spaying and neutering is, both morally and fiscally.

"It cost Madera County \$800,000 to fund animal control operations in 2006. That money could be better spent than processing, housing and then destroying these 5,000 animals last year."

Gross says reducing the huge pet overpopulation and stopping the breeding of unwanted dogs and cats is the best way to control the escalating costs and stop the slaughter. "If people faced the facts that we as tax payers are paying such a high cost to destroy so many domestic dogs and cats, maybe then they would realize that a mandatory spay and neuter law is a good thing," Gross said. "As Madera County expands, the pet overpopulation problem is also going to only grow."

According to the California Healthy Pets Act, spaying and neutering also results in significant public health and safety benefits, particularly the reduction of dangers caused by roaming stray animals, the transmission of rabies and communicable animal diseases and the occurrences of dog bites. It is well documented that unaltered dogs are three times more likely to attack humans and other animals. The Center for Disease Control statistics show California suffers the nation's highest occurrences of dog bites, animal attacks and attack-related fatalities in the nation. Children are the most common victims. The Humane Society of the United States says animals that are spayed or neutered make better pets, roaming and fighting is reduced, pets are healthier with fewer reproductive and health problems.

The mission of animal control is law enforcement, reunification of lost pets with owners, pet adoption, recovery of injured animals and pet education. "Our mission should not be the wholesale euthanasia and disposal of unwanted dogs and cats, just because people were not responsible enough to prevent unwanted litters," Gross said. "Responsibility rests with the pet owner. The best thing for the pet, the family and the community is to get the pet fixed."

Madera County animal shelter has many animals placed with volunteers in foster homes, because the shelter does not have the space to house all the puppies and kittens dropped off at the shelter. "We have a hard-working, creative, dedicated staff and a great group of volunteers that raise money, help with education, fostering and adoption efforts – but it's just not enough," Gross said.

## A "Fix It" Ticket for Animals

If enacted, the mandatory spay and neuter law would be like a "fix it" ticket for animals Gross said. "We don't want to write tickets. We want cooperation and compliance. We want to be able to have the tools to ensure people get their animals fixed and not allow them to breed indiscriminately," she said. "Right now there is no incentive to stop the constant breeding. This is an enforcement tool to add to what we already do on a daily basis now. We would write a warning ticket and provide the owner every option to get their animals fixed before proceeding to the fine." The law would provide for discretion and flexibility of permits and fees at each of the local counties.

For those people that cannot afford spay and neutering at a veterinarian, most shelters have several low-cost spay and neuter programs. "We have one spay program right now for as little as a \$20 co-pay," Gross said. "We cannot convince enough people to take advantage of it even at that low price. People just don't seem to want to take the time or the trouble to get their animals fixed."

## Success on the Coast

In 1995, the County of Santa Cruz enacted a mandatory spay and neuter ordinance. Mike McFarland, General Manager of Animal Services for Santa Cruz County from July 2002, to June of 2006 said, "The law was highly successful. We initially had some resistance from breeders, but in the 10 years since the law went into effect the number of unwanted animals had dropped over 50 percent. In 2002 we had about 10,000 animals come in, and in 2006 the number dropped to under 5,000. And that's during a period of 18 percent [human] population growth. It works," McFarland said.

## The End of Mutts?

"Even with this new law the problem of pet overpopulation will not disappear overnight," Gross said. "As with any new law it will be a slow process of education, compliance and enforcement. There will be a gradual decline each year, with less animals having to be destroyed each year. There will be no shortage of mixed breeds in our life time."

People can help by making sure their own pets are fixed and encourage their friends and neighbors to do so. Report pet owners that allow continual breeding of unwanted pets so that education and assistance can be provided, Gross suggested. "Calling your local and state representatives and letting them know you support this bill would also be helpful," Gross said.

"Of course, when this law goes into effect we will be overwhelmed with requests for low cost financial spay and neuter assistance," she said. "Anyone that would like to help with that can make a donation to the Friends of Madera County Animal Shelter so we can continue to provide this option."

Gross acknowledged that some people will resent being told what to do with their animals. "To them I would say come and spend a day in an animal shelter. See the process and see the suffering for themselves. Putting a stop to the breeding of unwanted animals is the best way to stop the euthanasia."

*A full version of bill AB 1634 is viewable at [www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/07-08/bill/asm/ab\\_1601-1650/ab\\_1634\\_bill\\_20070223\\_introduced.pdf](http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/07-08/bill/asm/ab_1601-1650/ab_1634_bill_20070223_introduced.pdf).*



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# The BIG ONE: Seniors' 15th Annual Spring Home and Garden Festival

Annual Spring Event Happens Saturday, April 7 from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

By Eleanore Burchell

The Ranchos/Hills Senior Center, located at 37330 Berkshire, is celebrating the green this month while also planning our 15th Annual Spring Home and Garden Festival for April 7.

We would like to wish everyone a very happy St. Patrick's Day, the day which honors St. Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland. Here in the United States, Americans march in parades, dance the Irish jig and gather to sing Irish songs. People wear green in memory of Ireland,

the Emerald Isle. Some wear shamrocks, a clover with three leaves. New York City has the largest parade and celebration with Savanna, Georgia coming in second. For the past three or four years, our membership has celebrated with a corn beef and cabbage dinner which we enjoyed again on Saturday, March 17.

March 17 was not the day St. Patrick was born but the day he died. Even though we don't know the date of his birth, most scholars believe the year was 385 AD and the year of his death was 461 AD.

St. Patrick was born in Wales, studied religion to become a priest and then went to Ireland to teach the people about God. There are many wonderful stories about St. Patrick, some true and some not so true. The most famous legend is that he

drove the snakes out of Ireland. This did not happen but the Irish will tell you that you cannot find a snake throughout the whole country of Ireland.

The next monthly sale is the BIG ONE for the year, namely our 15th Annual Spring Home and Garden Festival, Saturday, April 7, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Please mark your calendar and make plans to be here with us. Start your day off right with a \$5 biscuits and gravy breakfast from 6:30 to 9:30 a.m. This will be served at the center. We are fortunate enough to again have the Master Gardeners with us to conduct a plant clinic to help us identify plants, share cultural information and diagnose plant diseases. Many vendors with a variety of their wares, specialties, crafts, etc. will be here. Raffle tickets will be available for our beautiful quilt, \$250 Rancho Market shopping spree, or a one-night stay at Bass Lake.

The volunteer fire department men with their fire truck are a favorite for the little kids. Last year it was such a thrill to see the tykes smile and have their eyes twinkle as they climbed up to see a real fire truck. Fingerprinting of the children will be held in the main building. We literally have something for everyone!

Our garden staff has been busy potting 130 fruits trees and shrubs. Flats of pretty flowering plants will also be available. What is one person's discard is another person's treasure and our Treasure House has everything from a good used refrigerator, sofa or end table, to the smallest little baby socks. Come and check out the new items. Just follow your nose as the air will be filled with the baking of hot cinnamon rolls and fresh coffee. Barbecued hot dogs, hamburgers and cold drinks will be available for lunch. The homemade goodies bake sale and produce sections

and cookbooks will be outside on the patio. The boutique sale will be held in the main building.

We don't want you to forget us during the week so remember the plants, produce and boutique sections are available Monday through Friday 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Tuesday, 6 to 9 p.m. and Thursday evenings between 6 and 9 p.m.

Remember, being happy does not mean everything is perfect. It means you have decided to see beyond the imperfections!

Our next travel adventure will be Oct. 9 through Oct. 22. We will fly to the East Coast then board a bus. We plan to see the fall colors of the eastern U.S. and Canada plus many other sights in the area. For more information or if interested in joining the group, call Joann 645-4864 as an immediate deposit is needed to hold a spot for you.

The April Birthday and Anniversary celebration will be held on April 14 at 11 a.m. at Sizzler, 3121 W. Shaw in Fresno. The March celebration was held on Saturday, March 10 at 11:30 a.m. at the Japanese Kitchen, 711 W. Shaw, Clovis.

Remember Tuesdays are BINGO nights from 5:30 p.m. to 9 p.m.

If you need someone to laugh with, come join our Thursday evening potlucks with games played afterward. There is a lot of fun here. Remember laughter is good for your body and soul.

### More Facts and Fun

A nutritionally balanced lunch program Monday through Friday at 11:30 a.m. Suggested price for 60 years and older is \$1.75. Reservations are needed a day in advance so remember to call Joann at 645-4864. There is still room in the

Please see SENIORS on P. 12

3/07

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3/07

# SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

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## SENIORS Cont. from P. 11

well-attended exercise class on Monday, Wednesday and Fridays, 10:15 to 11:30 a.m. The Line Dancing class resumed on Thursday, Jan. 11 at 1 p.m. This combines fun and exercise. You need not be a member to attend these classes. The attendance has been growing but there is always room for one more – you! Come to think of it, there is room for two more – you and your friend.

### Up and Coming Events

March 29, 6 p.m. Monthly potluck with Italian/Pasta theme followed by Hand and Foot, Pinochle or other games.  
 April 7, 15th Annual Home and Garden Festival, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Biscuits and Gravy Breakfast starts at 6:30 a.m.

April 14, 11 a.m. Birthday and Anniversary Celebration, Sizzler, 3121 W. Shaw, Fresno.

### Weekly Events

Monday through Friday Lunch Program, 11:30 a.m. (Reservations needed, call Joann 645-4864)

Monday, Exercise Class, 10:15 to 11:30 a.m.

Tuesday, Pinochle, noon until ???

Tuesday, BINGO, 5:30 to 9 p.m. (Hot dogs, hamburgers, desserts and more available)

Wednesday, Exercise Class, 10:15 to 11:30 a.m.

Wednesday, noon to 1 p.m. Card

### BINGO

Wednesday, 3:30 to 5:30 p.m.

Watercolor Painting Class

Thursday, 1 p.m. Line Dancing Class

Thursday, 6 to 9 p.m. Potluck then Hand and Foot, Pinochle or other games (please bring your own plate and silverware).

Friday, Exercise Class, 10:15 to 11:30 a.m.

Please feel free to come visit our Senior Center and get acquainted with our members. We welcome you to come and be one of us as our organization offers and promotes social, educational and civic activities in order to provide a better quality of life for all senior citizens. You have received an invitation. Hope to see you soon?

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## LETTERS Cont. from P. 5

*A Letter to the Ranchos  
and Rolling Hills Communities*

Dear Editor:

There has been quite a bit of conversation lately throughout the Ranchos Community about the Gateway Village project, and especially about the impacts that the project will have on Golden Valley Unified School District. Having been part of the community now for more than 12 years, I have seen how various topics can "catch fire" in the Ranchos. No topic can raise community interest more than any discussion relating to schools. I thought that it might serve us all well if I tried to shed some light on certain facts as I know them.

As the local representative for Castle & Cooke, I have had the opportunity to become involved in many community events, programs, organizations and issues. Over the years, I have made many friends and established valuable professional relationships. I have learned that the Ranchos community is a very special place. The Ranchos is a great "family town." It's a great place for kids to grow up. It's a place where you can know your neighbors.

In my professional career, I have had the opportunity over the years to work on many exciting projects in many different locations. It is important to me that the projects I have been involved with are responsibly planned and are of the highest quality. For these reasons, it has been my pleasure to represent Castle & Cooke and the Gateway Village project. Castle & Cooke has the reputation for building quality, sustainable projects that provide good value, both now and into the future. Castle & Cooke incorporates "leading edge" planning principles and delivers extensively researched and affordably priced residential and commercial properties to the marketplace. Through the implementation of a program called "ComfortWise," Castle & Cooke's newer projects have introduced "green" building practices, including solar and photo-voltaic technologies. Other responsible building practices have helped create new homes that consume less energy and other important resources. Commitment to quality and customer satisfaction are important.

Projects like Gateway Village take several years (15 to 20) to complete. In order for the project to enjoy continued success, it is important that the steps that are taken today will "add value" to the homes and businesses that will be built over time. It is important that the project earn a reputation for quality. Without this reputation, the project cannot become an enduring new community and Castle & Cooke will not have achieved its economic potential. Castle & Cooke has several examples of successful planned communities in California, Arizona, Hawaii and Florida. I invite you to look at these communities through Castle & Cooke's Website, [www.castlecooke.com/live.html](http://www.castlecooke.com/live.html). On this site, you can see photographs and read detailed information on the contents of each community.

Along with Castle & Cooke's commitment to quality comes the commitment to being a good neighbor and community member. Castle & Cooke maintains an active community presence throughout the planning and development of each planned community. As was mentioned above, sometimes this involvement can span decades.

I am one who believes that talking about one's own good deeds can detract from the giving. However, under the circumstances, I think it may be helpful to describe some of Castle & Cooke's involvement in the Ranchos community.

Castle & Cooke was, and is, a found-

ing charter member of the Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce. We realize that one of the strengths of any community is healthy and vibrant local business. In order for business to grow and prosper, a network needs to be established that can gather and disseminate needed information to local business owners and leaders. The Golden Valley Chamber has worked hard over the years to provide community activities and programs that can help local business and the community at large to prosper. I personally have been a member of both the Madera Chamber and our local Chamber, and I have served on the board and am a past President of the Golden Valley Chamber. I am proud of the fact that Golden Valley Chamber membership has continued to grow each year since its inception.

Among other things, I have served as event committee chairman, helping plan, organize and host various community events and programs including the Flatlander's Day Parade (and KMJ Radio's annual involvement), the Labor Day Community Picnic and the Chamber's quarterly "Town Hall Meetings." The quarterly meetings have included guest speakers Frank Bigelow, Mike Villines, Dave Cogdill, Chuck Poochigian, Stell Manfredi, Bobby Kahn and Chris Mariscotti, to name a few. This has been an effort to help our local community and business owners better understand important issues that may have an impact on business at the local, county and state levels.

In addition, Castle & Cooke and I personally have supported virtually all of the other local community organizations

including Kiwanis, Ranchos/Hills Seniors, Sequoia Chapter of the Boy Scouts, Madera Ag Boosters, Valley Children's Hospital, Ronald McDonald House and the Rancho's Library. This participation and support has occurred consistently over the last decade and will continue throughout the development of the Gateway Project. Castle & Cooke recognizes the importance and contribution of strong community organizations to the well-being and prosperity of the community as a whole. Again, it has always been our intention to be

responsible community members.

Finally, I would like to describe the importance of schools and Castle & Cooke's involvement and contribution to Golden Valley Unified School District. Much the same as the importance of successful community organizations and viable local businesses, quality local schools and educational programs are the heart of any community. Successful (and locally controlled) school systems lead to

Please see **LETTERS** on P. 15

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LETTERS Cont. from P. 14

successful and sustainable communities. For these reasons, Castle & Cooke has attempted to quietly support the school district – and the local community – since prior to the district's inception. I suppose that there are still a few people in the community that know of Castle & Cooke's extensive involvement. From the time of formation of the "exploratory committee" (made up of Ranchos community members) until the ultimate reorganization of Golden Valley Unified out of Madera Unified, Castle & Cooke has supported the effort.

Castle & Cooke did not attempt to lead the committee; only support the committee's efforts. We were convinced that the community needed to lead the way. We worked with members of the "exploratory committee" to bring necessary professional expertise to the reorganization effort. Castle & Cooke funded the costs of both the consultants and the preparation of necessary documents that led to the successful district formation. We helped with the process of successfully introducing the district formation idea to the Ranchos community at large. We are proud to have helped the community in this manner. It is the community that did the difficult work. Again, our contribution and participation came with no expectations.

Castle & Cooke is currently in the process of negotiating with Golden Valley Unified School District to complete an agreement to provide schools for the future families that will reside in the Gateway Village project. I have every reason to believe that we will be successful. Castle & Cooke has always stated that it is our obligation to provide for quality schools. Unfortunately, there has been a lot of misinformation circulating throughout the community on this topic.

Castle & Cooke and GVUSD have recently collaborated on the adoption of a "Joint Public Statement" that includes the following principles:

- We agree that Gateway Village shall be responsible for the provision of all school facilities required to serve the students generated by the project
- We agree to use rational planning principles and factual information that can be verified
- We agree to use "fair share" principles – fair to existing residents as well as new homeowners and future tax-payers
- We agree to meet on a regular schedule with the intent of finalizing the agreement prior to county approval of Gateway Village
- We agree to keep the content of meetings confidential while good faith negotiations are proceeding. Information regarding agreements reached will be jointly released

We are still early in the negotiating process. The citizen's advisory committee is in the process of completing their recommendations to the school board. Both the School District and Castle & Cooke are gathering needed data. We have agreed on

a meeting schedule that is anticipated to conclude at the end of May. This is still in advance of the time we expect project approval from the county.

In light of our mutual commitment, we ask that members of the community patiently wait for the negotiations to unfold. As I mentioned earlier, I have every reason to believe that our negotiations will be successful and we will arrive at a mutually acceptable agreement for the provision of schools for Gateway Village. We ask that the community honor this request in recognition of Castle & Cooke's ongoing commitment to our community.

Sincerely,

*Steve Krueger*  
Project Manager  
Castle & Cooke's Gateway Village

Dear Editor:

We wish to take this opportunity to express our profound and deepest gratitude to both Mrs. Virginia Vick of the Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce and Mr. Frank Bigelow of the Madera County Board of Supervisors.

Buying a Beer and Wine license in the market is one thing, but getting an approval for our location in the Madera Ranchos before the Madera County Board of Supervisors is totally a different matter. Not knowing where to start we approached Mr. Bailey, publisher of the Ranchos Independent. After suggesting to us a few ideas he pointed us in the right direction, asking us to get in touch with Virginia. Thank you very much Randy for all your help.

When we first approached Virginia regarding this she gave us a patient hearing and promised to render all possible help. She spontaneously and on her own introduced us to Mr. Bigelow. This was indeed a praiseworthy gesture on her part. Mr. Bigelow is a repository of outstanding traits such as courtesy, humility, devotion and dedication. After hearing our plight he went to the root of the problem and found a workable solution for issuance of a Beer and Wine License.

We want to thank wholeheartedly the Madera County Planning Department for their help and the County Board of Supervisors for approving the issuance of license.

It is with great pleasure we are dedicating our store "Ranchos Beer and Wine" to Mrs. Virginia Vick and Mr. Bigelow.

We are greatly indebted to Mr. Ray Husted, resident of the Ranchos, in helping us give the store a face lift! We certainly hope our customers will be impressed by the new look. We are indeed happy to announce that effective March 15 we opened for business. Prices of all commodities have been slashed to the rock bottom to effectively and efficiently cater to all the needs of the community in and around the Madera Ranchos.

Cooperation and patronage of all people are earnestly solicited.

Sincerely,

*Bala and Nari*  
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# Are Your Home Locks Safe? The Safe & Sound "Key" to "Lock Bumping"

By Dave Johnson

When crooked minds come together on the Internet to flout the rules, buzz ensues. The latest illicit craze wending its way through our internet is "LOCK BUMPING." Never heard of it? Neither had most of us until searches began to spike on the term in late January. This relatively easy way to pick a lock began the year with minimal search activity, but has since skyrocketed over the past month with thousands of queries.

So what is lock bumping? It involves shaving down a standard key, inserting it into a lock and then lightly "bumping" the key. It is a technique for opening a pin tumbler lock using a specially crafted "bump key." One bump key will work for all locks of the same type. Voila! Locks open and loot could disappear. A favored trick of thieves, this technique picked up buzz when how-to videos began to circulate on the Web. Searches on "bump keys," "lock bumping keys" and "lock bumping video" are all on the rise. I'm not highlighting this thievery related trend to encourage bad behavior – I just want to let you know that devious denizens of the Web are always learning new tricks. What can you do about it? Maybe you'd be wise to investigate searches on "alarm systems" (Next Month's Topic).

## HISTORY

In the 1970s, locksmiths in Denmark shared a technique for knocking on a lock cylinder while applying slight pressure to the back of the lock plug. When the pins would jump inside of the cylinder, the plug would be able to slide out freely and disassemble the lock quickly. The use of a bump key was not introduced until some time later and was first recognized as a potential security issue around 2002-2003 by Klaus Noch who brought it to the attention of the German media. After further examination of the procedure, a white paper was drafted in 2005 by Barry Wels and Rop Gonggrijp of The Open Organization Of Lockpickers (TOOOL), detailing the method and its applicability. The technique then attracted more popular attention in 2005 when a Dutch television show, Nova, broadcast a story about the method. After the method received further publicity from TOOOL presentations at security conference talks, members of TOOOL and a Dutch consumer group, Dutch Consumentenbond, analyzed the capability of the method on 70 different lock models and with trained and untrained users in a 2006 study. At the same time, Marc Weber Tobias, an American security expert, began to talk publicly in the United States about the technique and its potential security threats. In 2006, he released two further white papers regarding the technique and its potential legal ramifications.

## COUNTERMEASURES

Ironically, more precise manufacturing tolerances within the cylinder make bumping easier as the pins move more freely and smoothly. Also, more expensive locks made of hardened steel are actually more vulnerable because they are less prone to damage during the bumping process which might cause a cheaper lock to jam. Locks having security pins (spool or mushroom pins, etc.) – even when combined with a regular tumbler mechanism – generally make bumping somewhat more difficult, but not impossible. Electronic locks, magnetic locks and locks using rotating disks are not vulnerable to this attack.

Because a bump key must have the same blank profile as the lock it is made to open, restricted or registered key profiles are much safer from bumping, as the correct keyblanks cannot legally be obtained without permission and/or registration with relevant locksmiths' associations. Locks made by Medeco, Mul-T-Lock (sister companies), Schlage and other manufacturers are advertised to be bump proof. Medeco and Schlage Primus locks are advertised as unbumpable due to sidebars that must be aligned to a specific depth to enable pin movement and pins chiseled at angles to further thwart bumping. Locks that have trap pins which engage when a pin does not support it will jam a lock's cylinder. Another countermeasure is shallow drilling, in which one or more of the pin stacks is drilled slightly less deep than the others. If an attempt were made on a lock that has shallow drilled pin stacks the bump key will be unable to bump the shallow drilled pins as they are too high for the bump key to engage.

## REFERENCES

Take a look at [www.medeco.com](http://www.medeco.com) and [www.mul-t-lockusa.com](http://www.mul-t-lockusa.com) for more information. Contact me. I would love to hear from you. E-mail me at [info@masterjohnson.com](mailto:info@masterjohnson.com). Your participation is vital and appreciated. Remember, since we are all in this together, let's make it a community project, have some fun, and increase our level of safety.

## PARENTAL GUIDANCE

Spend some time with your children reviewing the following sites: [www.amw.com/kids](http://www.amw.com/kids), [tcs.cybertipline.com](http://tcs.cybertipline.com) and [www.missingkids.com/adCouncil](http://www.missingkids.com/adCouncil)

## SELF-DEFENSE TIPS: SEEK PROFESSIONAL INSTRUCTION

Protect your space. Always stand at a slanted angle with one foot back spaced at about shoulder width. Hands should be relaxed and held between waist and chest level. Don't wait to be hit in order to defend yourself. **KNOW YOUR ENVIRONMENT. BE PREPARED TO ACT INSTANTLY.**

*Master Johnson is a world recognized security and self-defense expert specializing in execu-*

*tive protection, hand-to-hand, multiple opponents, and weapon disarms. He is listed in the "Who is Who" in Martial Arts and was named "Master Instructor of the Year" 1996 by the World Martial Arts Hall of Fame. He is the owner of Golden*

*Valley Martial Arts, Tactical Training International, Dave Johnson Real Estate, and operates the World's only online self-defense and Black Belt training course at [www.masterjohnson.com](http://www.masterjohnson.com). He can be contacted at 559-917-5262.*




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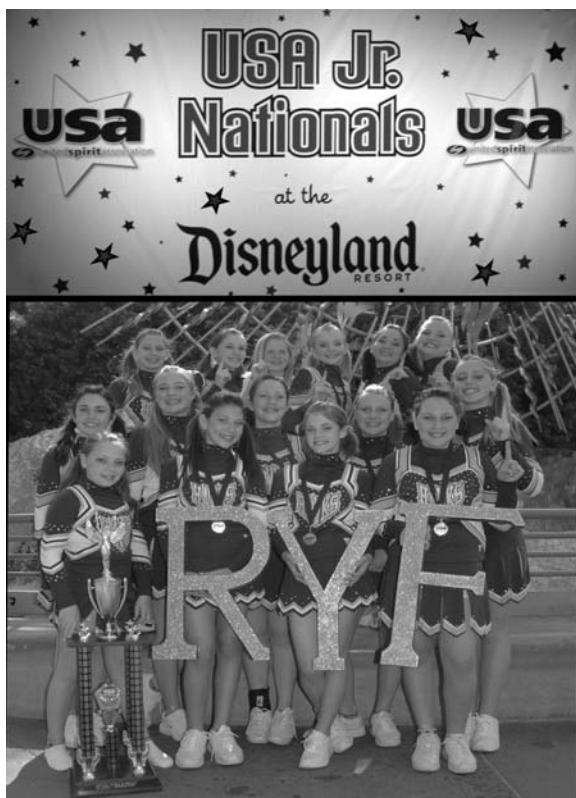
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3/07



# Ranchos RYF Senior Cheerleaders take National Show Cheer Title



By Anita Wiegand

This has been a most exciting year for the Ranchos Youth Football (RYF) Hawks Senior Cheer Team. They not only rooted and cheered on our RYF teams, but they have also competed at many different competitions, including capturing the U.S.A. National Show Cheer Championship on March 3 at Disneyland's California Adventure Park. This national title was for a stunt division that the RYF teams had never competed in before.

The national championship came after tons of hard work and hours of practice. This senior team was a combination of our Senior and Junior football cheerleaders that wanted to continue on and compete after the football season ended. The 15-member team consisted of Ranchos Middle School eighth graders Melissa Aughe, Mandy Heron, Samantha Lee, Katie Moore, Halee Sabourin and Carrie Wiegand and Rivergold Middle

School eighth grader Daylinn McFerrin. Also on the team were Ranchos Middle School seventh graders Tiana Bisbee, Haley Ferro, Emily Lawson, Sarah Niehaus and Nicole Ray. Rounding out the team were Webster and Sierra View sixth graders Paige Dolacki, Shelby Johnson and Aly Toole.

This year's senior team competed in three regional competitions and two national competitions. Their competition season began on Nov. 5 with a trip to Turlock, Calif. to compete in the Jamz Regionals where they took first in show cheer and second in the pom/dance division. These victories secured their place to compete at the Jamz Nationals in Las Vegas on Feb. 10. With over 500 teams competing during a four day period, the Senior Hawks Cheer team placed fourth in the pom/dance division at this event.

On Nov. 12 at the Universal Cheerleaders Association (UCA) Regionals in San Luis Obispo, the Senior Hawks competed in and won first place in the show cheer division which qualified them to compete in UCA Nationals in Orlando, Florida. Due to a conflict with the Jamz Nationals, the team chose not to attend. On Dec. 9 the team traveled to Tracy, Calif. to compete in the U.S.A. regional competition where they placed third in their show cheer division and it qualified them to compete at the U.S.A.



Nationals held at Disneyland's California Adventure Park on March 3. On that day, these 15 girls with their coaches, advisors and family members traveled to Disneyland and walked out on stage to give the performance of their lives. They were the only team that hit every mark with perfection, earning them the National Title and the right to be called U.S.A. National Show Cheer Champions.



During all these competitions the team was judged on its dance skill fundamentals, routine execution, choreography and showmanship.

The girls had some local support to get to the National level this year, both from businesses and individuals, and would like to thank them for helping make their dreams a reality: Holiday Pools, Wesco Distribution, Assured Mortgage, Cool Tool,



Jerry Eddings Realtors, George and Sally Oliver, Hedrick Chevrolet, Rocco and Louise Argyilan, California Highway Patrol Central Division Air Operations Unit, Kim and Gary Mull, Hurst Hardware, Jewel Mull, Executive Sr. Sales Director with Mary Kay Cosmetics, DIM Sportswear, Kayli and Karissa McFerrin and the RYF Board of Directors.




The RYF Hawks Senior Cheer Team coaches were Amber Lee and Charity Schweikert. The advisors for the team were Anita Wiegand, Debbie Lawson, Annette Toole and additional help came from Kristi Schweikert the RYF cheer coordinator for the RYF League.

Another award-winning season will begin sometime after Spring Break and fly-



ers will be sent home with your children. The RYF League is looking for coaches, team moms and advisors for the upcoming 2007-08 season. Anyone interested in applying for these positions or needing additional information can email Cheer Coordinator Kristi Schweikert at ryfhawkscheer@yahoo.com or call her at 559-645-4142.





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# County Memorial Needs Your Help

The deadline created by the Madera County Law Enforcement Leaders Association to create the county's first ever Peace Officer's Memorial is fast approaching. May 2007 is the target and the race is on to raise the necessary remaining funds.

The cost to design and construct the Peace Officer memorial illustrated here is estimated at approximately \$40,000. To date, the Association has raised \$26,577.16, more than half of what is needed to complete the project.

In an effort to meet the target deadline, Sheriff John Anderson is hoping others will follow those who have already made generous donations in an effort to erect a monument that will forever honor our fallen Peace Officers.

"A number of communities nationwide already have a monument or memo-

rial commemorating law enforcement officers who lost their lives in the line of duty," Anderson said. "Sadly Madera County has no such memorial.

"Our plan is to place the monument beside the county's already existing monument, which honors our military heroes, in Madera County's Courthouse Park."

The week of May 15 is traditionally recognized as National Peace Officer Memorial Week and the goal is to have the Madera County Law Enforcement memorial completed by Friday, May 18.

Anyone who wishes to contribute to the construction of the Madera County Law Enforcement Memorial may send their donations to Sheriff John P Anderson c/o Madera County Law Enforcement Leaders Association, 14143 Road 28 Madera, CA 93638.



# Kids in Need of Ranchos Mentors

By Ramona Frances

An agency seeking adult mentors for high risk or disadvantaged children is reaching out to caring adults in the Madera Ranchos area who have time to give. Boys and girls from 6 to 18 years old are waiting for male or female mentors who can share positive values and enrich the life of a child.

Volunteers must be willing to go through a screening process, be fingerprinted, possess a valid driver's license, have proof of car insurance, have a concern for children, be a role model and have references of persons who have known them for a minimum of three years.

"We ask for a one-year commitment, three to four hours a week. There is no set schedule. A college student might be worried about his or her schedule changing and be hesitant to commit, but the program is flexible," Ramirez said.

Nicole Pitarre, a former enrollment specialist said Big Brothers encourages mentors to go to a park with their "Little Brothers" and talk and listen to each other. The emphasis is not on spending a lot of



Twelve year old Louis Petroff and his sister, Jessica, are bowling to raise money for the Big Brothers Big Sisters mentoring program in Madera. Jessica has been matched with a mentor but Louis is still waiting. Boys typically wait longer, sometimes years, to be matched with a mentor.

Photo by Ramona Frances

money. She said the agency encourages mentors, called BIGS, to get out with their mentees, called LITTLES, and be active in the community.

For more information call Deanna Ramirez at 673-4863.

# The One That DIDN'T Get Away



Two local Ranchos boys, Drew (left) and David Whittemore caught the surprise of their lives while fishing for striped bass with their Dad on the Delta near Rio Vista on Saturday, Jan. 27. This white sturgeon measured 65 inches long and the local bait shop weighed it in at 68 pounds. Its estimated age is between 15 and 20 years old.

Photo by Wayne Whittemore

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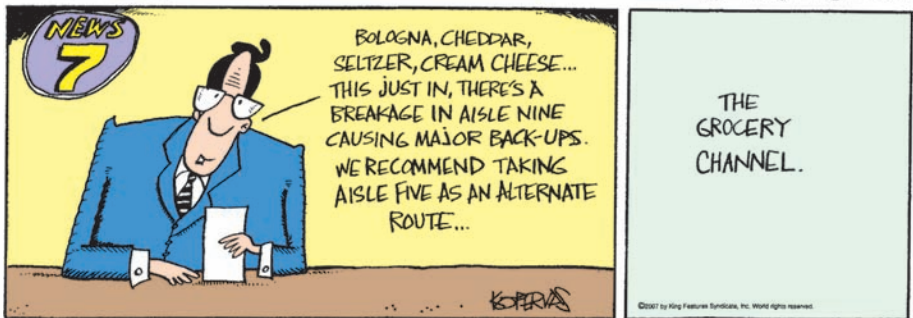
Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps



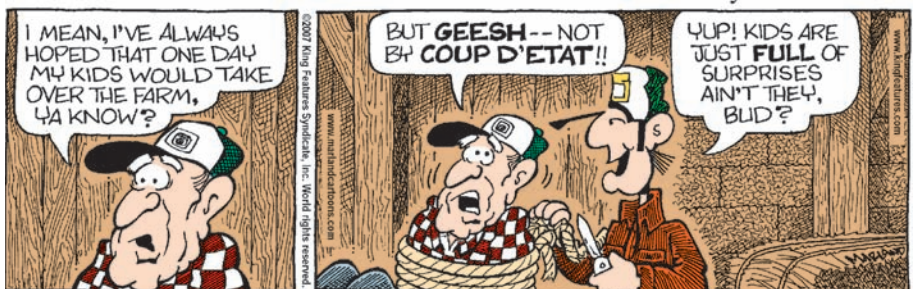
Out on a Limb

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R.F.D.

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The Spats

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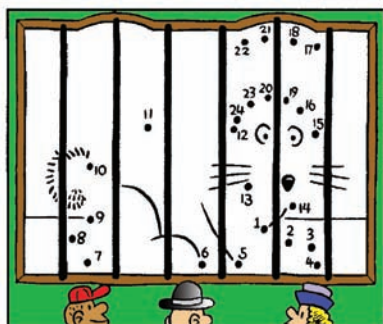


HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels. 1. Picture is missing. 2. Wave is added on screen. 3. Pants are different. 4. Chips on the floor. 5. Buttons are missing. 6. Buttons are missing.



IS THIS THE NEW KING OF BEASTS? Join the dots and find out.

Answer: No, it's only a Giant Bolivian Bashful Bunny.

READ THE FOLLOWING sentence once and state how many "s" are in it. "To be genuine, every package of Kellogg's Corn Flakes must bear the signature of W. F. Kellogg."

Answer: There are four "s" in the sentence. The "s" in "of" are often missed.

DOUBLE TROUBLE! Below are six partially spelled words. Four letters are missing from each word. In each case you must find a two-letter word that can be used to fill in the missing letters. Below you'll find some hints.

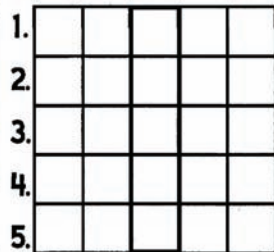
- 1. A favorite food. 2. A king or prince. 3. An Asian disease. 4. Type of headgear. 5. Used for cooking. 6. A crucial situation.

- 1. P \_ \_ T \_ \_ 2. M \_ \_ A R A J \_ \_ 3. \_ R I \_ \_ R I 4. \_ R D \_ \_ T 5. \_ B A C \_ \_ 6. C R \_ \_ \_

Answers: 1. (KS) Pastas. 2. (H) Hibachi. 3. (BE) Beriberi. 4. (H) Headgear. 5. (H) Hibachi. 6. (KS) Crisis.

Junior Whirl

by Charles Barry Townsend



BIG TOP BAFFLERS!

IN THE GRID, at left, there is room to enter five five-letter words pertaining to the circus world. The following definitions should help you:

- 1. To put up a circus tent. 2. What acrobats do. 3. Type of clown pants. 4. Performers in the World's Smallest Circus. 5. Found in animal cages.

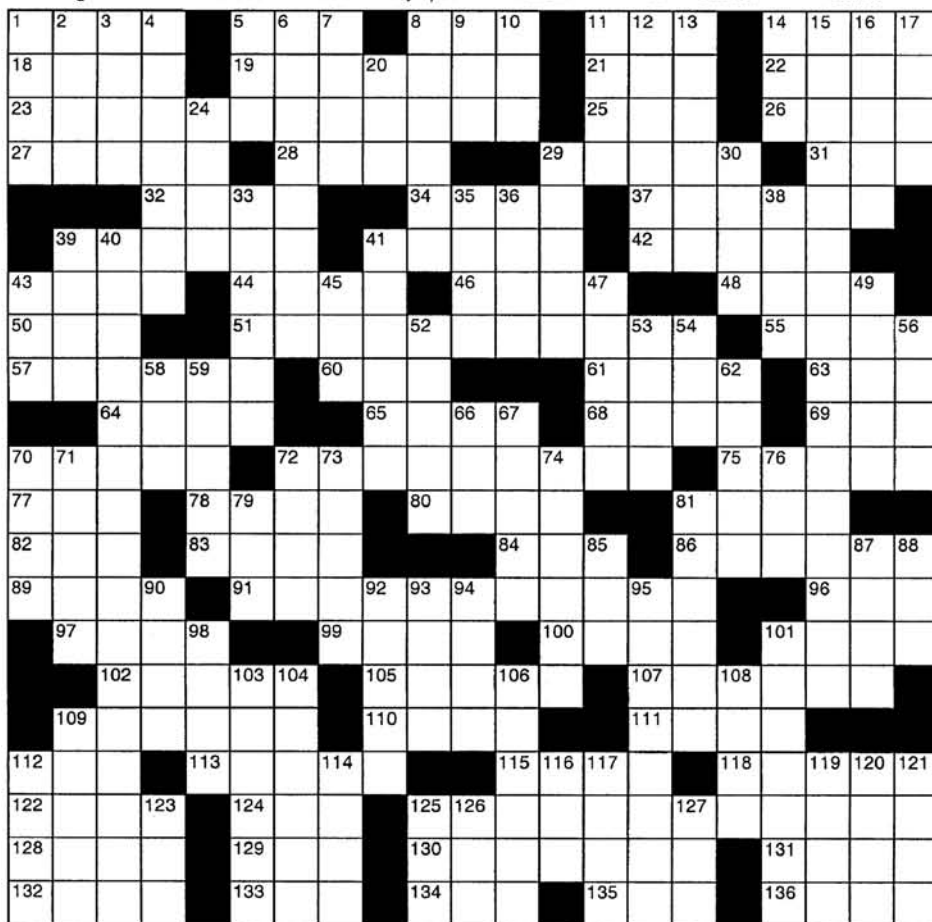
There is a dark frame around the center column of letters. If you correctly solve the puzzle, the letters in this frame, top to bottom, will spell out the name of a circus animal.

The center column word is "tiger."

Super Crossword

GREAT SCOTTS!

- ACROSS: 1 Piglet's papa. 5 It's up your sleeve. 8 Waugh's "The Loved —". 11 Vapor. 14 — check. 18 Eban of Israel. 19 Geometric figure. 21 Hibiscus garland. 22 Commedia dell'—. 23 Scott Hamilton's rival. 25 Chemical ending. 26 Obtains. 27 New Hampshire campus. 28 — ex machina. 29 Jury members. 31 "Ready! —! Go!". 32 Ordered. 34 Gilpin of "Frasier". 37 21st President. 39 Chews the scenery. 41 Annual award. 42 Bewitching location. 43 Dealt with a dragon. 44 — Japanese War. 46 Harvest. 48 Hurler. 50 Rock's — Supply. 51 Scott Wolf series. 55 With 89. 60 Bond rating. 61 High-flying agcy. 63 Claire or Bailin. 64 Component. 65 Nab a gnat. 68 Adjusted an ascot. 69 Mil. base. 70 Show indifference. 72 Scott Baio co-star. 75 Column style. 77 Flicka's food. 78 Lohengrin's love. 80 Actress Mia. 81 Reject. 82 Periodontists' org. 83 Wander. 84 With 120 Down, Bowser's group. 86 Uproar. 89 See 55 Across. 91 Scott Glenn film. 96 Liechtenstein's cont. 97 Command at a corner. 99 Iridescent stone. 100 Atmosphere. 101 Hotels. 102 Shortstop. 105 Vatican virtue. 107 99 and 007. 109 "The Producers" star. 110 — vera. 111 "Fantasia" frames. 112 Prohibit. 113 On — (doing great). 115 Vittle statistics? 118 "April Love" singer. 122 Riyadh resident. 124 By means of. 125 Scott Joplin composition. 128 Hint. 129 Sixth sense. 130 Varnish. 131 Pavlova or Paquin. 132 Table d'—. 133 Dem.'s opponent. 134 Predatory fish. 135 Theater sign. 136 "— my lips!". DOWN: 1 Conifer covering. 2 Bassoon relative. 3 Singer Lane. 4 Heavenly sight. 5 4 Down's shape. 6 Zimbabwe, formerly. 7 Grimace. 8 San Luis —, CA. 9 TV's "The Flying —". 10 Sialom curve. 11 Merriment. 12 Vergil's vagabond. 13 — Leone. 14 Give in to gravity. 15 Scott Turov novel. 16 Furry fisherman. 17 Try out. 20 East Lansing coll. 24 Tidy. 29 Damascus dish. 30 Normandy site. 33 Tyrant. 35 Spanish river. 36 Shorten a sail. 38 Olympic first lady. 39 Director Kazan. 40 Scott Carpenter's profession. 41 "... say — do". 43 Fool. 45 New Deal agcy. 47 1492 vessel. 49 Hawaiian island. 52 Applauds a bore? 53 Self-smitten. 54 Language suffix. 56 Not fem. 58 Shiba — (Japanese dog). 59 Neighbor of Mali. 62 "Farewell!". 66 "I — Rock" ('66 hit). 67 Museum piece. 70 Clarinetist. 71 Hot spot? 72 "Comic Dictionary" author. 73 Dack of "Dallas" city. 74 New Jersey city. 76 Baseball's "Master Melvin". 79 Bud's buddy. 81 Sail with Sinbad. 85 — Simbel. 87 Kennel features. 88 Cen. segments. 90 Stocking stuffers? 92 Horrify. 93 Brad, for one. 94 Role for Liz. 95 Prophetic. 98 Wilson of "La Femme Nikita". 101 To such an extent. 103 Restaurant employee. 104 Plaza Hotel kid. 106 Tone down. 108 Isle near Corsica. 109 Mrs. Phil Donahue. 112 Baroque composer. 114 Certain Finn. 116 Pipe connection. 117 "I Remember Mama" character. 119 Sarah — Jewett. 120 See 84 Across. 121 "My word!". 123 Hum bug? 125 Flavor enhancer: Abbr. 126 "Gotchal". 127 System starter.



TRIVIA TEST

By Marge Svenson

- 1. TELEVISION: Who starred in the original TV series "The Fugitive"? 2. MUSIC: Who sang the theme song to movie "The Spy Who Loved Me"? 3. GEOGRAPHY: What is the capital of Kuwait? 4. INVENTIONS: Where was lacquer invented? 5. GENERAL KNOWLEDGE: What is the national anthem of the United Kingdom? 6. LANGUAGE: What is an ecdysiast? 7. ASTRONOMY: What is the Perseids? 8. ANATOMY: What is the medius? 9. LITERATURE: Who wrote the novel "The Water Is Wide"? 10. GAMES: How many pockets are on an American roulette wheel?

Answers

- 1. David Janssen. 2. Carly Simon, "Nobody Does It Better". 3. Kuwait City. 4. China. 5. "God Save the Queen". 6. A stripper. 7. Major meteor shower. 8. The middle finger. 9. Pat Conroy. 10. 38.

MAGIC MAZE

PIONEERS OF PHOTOGRAPHY



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

- Beato Cornelius Hikoma Taunt Brady Eastman Land Tress Brandt Fauchery Llewelyn Zahn Cameron Harman Scheimpflug

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A Community Park?



Banquet Facilities?



A Business Conference Center?



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To Discuss the Feasibility of Planning and Constructing a

### New Community Center in the Madera Ranchos

to be discussed will be a Community Park • Banquet Facility  
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**Wednesday, April 18 • 7 p.m.**

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call the Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce at 645-4001 for more information