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**BIDEN'S
BORDER CRISIS
"NATIONAL SECURITY
THREAT."**

JASON OWENS, U.S. BORDER PATROL CHIEF

Picture courtesy of CBC News

In This Issue

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U.S. Border Patrol Chief Jason Owens recently expressed his concerns about the hundreds of thousands of illegal aliens who have successfully crossed into the U.S. homeland, calling it a "national security threat." Speaking on CBS News' "Face The Nation," Owens highlighted the influence of Mexican drug cartels in determining the flow of migrants across the southern border.

Owens emphasized the challenges faced by border patrol agents in monitoring the vast expanse of the border and responding to the constant influx of migrants. He noted that the tactic employed by cartels is to push groups of migrants across, diverting the attention of border officials while potentially engaging in illicit activities elsewhere.

The chief stressed that the entry of unknown foreign nationals poses a significant risk to national security, particularly with the increasing number of individuals

evading capture. Owens pointed out that while the total number of entries this fiscal year is approaching a million, the 140,000 individuals who have successfully evaded apprehension are particularly concerning.

He underscored the importance of border security in safeguarding national interests and preventing potential threats from entering the country. Owens highlighted the vulnerability of the border and the need to address the issue of unknown individuals with uncertain intentions crossing into the U.S.

Overall, Owens' remarks shed light on the complex challenges faced by border patrol agents in maintaining security along the southern border. The issue of illegal immigration and the influence of drug cartels continue to pose significant concerns for national security, requiring a comprehensive and coordinated response to address these threats effectively.

Why CA Primary Not Counted?

Two weeks after voting ended in California's primary, there are 166,000 ballots left to be counted, and a dozen congressional and legislative races remain too close to call, along with Proposition 1.

While the uncounted ballots are only about two percent of the 7.7 million cast, readers have again asked why it takes so long for California to finish counting votes.

California started mailing ballots to all registered voters for the November 2020 election. This year, about 50 percent of ballots cast were counted on primary night, March 5, compared to 41 percent in June 2022, according to data from the California Voter Foundation.

But processing mail-in ballots can take time. Any ballots postmarked by March 5 and received by March 12 still get counted. Also, there are a number of steps county elections offices take to ensure the integrity of each voter's ballot, some of which can't start until after election day. And counties have varying levels of staffing or resources that can impact how quickly the work is done. As of Tuesday night, 12 of 58 counties reported completing their tallies.

"It's not just about counting ballots, although that is critically important," said Ryan Ronco, president of the California Association of Clerks and Election Officials and registrar of voters for Placer County. "It's also about counting ballots accurately with staff that you have that can commit to that project — knowing that there are also other legally required projects that we need to complete during this period."

While part of the delay is due to en-

suring accuracy, lengthy vote counts can create distrust among some voters.

The state passed some laws to try and speed up the process. One new law allows counties to immediately scan vote-by-mail ballots from people who bring them in person. Placer County did so this primary. About 8,000 people used the system of the nearly 15,000 who came to vote centers.

Another new law allows counties to contact voters via email or text for signature verification. But both laws just went into effect on Jan. 1, and not all counties have had the time or resources to opt in yet.

In Orange County, the last batch of notification letters were sent out March 13, according to Bob Page, the county's registrar of voters. Voters have until two days prior to certification of the election to respond.

Counties have until April 2 to report the final results of the presidential primaries to the Secretary of State's office, and until April 5 for other state races. The Secretary of State will certify the final primary results by April 12.

In the special congressional election, the vote count has gone on so long there's already another election — The special to fill the remainder of former House Speaker Kevin McCarthy's term in the Republican-friendly 20th Congressional District.

In returns as of early Wednesday, Assemblymember Vince Fong had 41 percent of the vote, fellow Republican and Tulare County Sheriff Mike Boudreaux had 26 percent and Democratic teacher Marisa

Please see VOTE on P. 17

Safe Society is an Armed Society

By Stephen Frank

The year 2023 was a banner year for public safety. Over 12 million guns were purchased. Criminals no longer are concerned about the police. They now have to worry about citizens with guns.

"On July 4, 2023, the Washington Examiner noted National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) checks for gun purchases have been over a million a month for 47 straight months.

On March 19, 2024, Breitbart News spoke with National Shooting Sports Foundation's Mark Oliva and he said it has now been 55 consecutive months of one million-plus NICS checks."

We need to protect ourselves. The Second Amendment is the answer.

The Second Amendment

FBI figures reported by NBC News on March 19, 2024, show that crime fell during 2023, a year in which there were over one million background checks a month for gun purchases.

Breitbart News spoke with National Shooting Sports Foundation's Mark Oliva and he said it has now been 55 consecutive months of one million-plus NICS checks.

This means, leading up to 2023 and throughout 2023, Americans were pouring into gun stores to acquire firearms, yet

"fourth-quarter numbers" reported by NBC News showed "a 13 percent decline in murder in 2023 from 2022, a 6 percent decline in reported violent crime and a 4 percent decline in reported property crime."

Former CIA analyst Jeff Asher commented on the lower crime figures, saying, "It suggests that when we get the final data in October, we will have seen likely the largest one-year decline in murder that has ever been recorded."

There was a similar situation after gun sales surged in 2013. Breitbart News pointed out that private gun sales skyrocketed during 2013 with 21,093,273 background checks, and, according to the

FBI, "offenses" in the categories of violent crimes and property crimes decreased during the first six months of 2014.

Breitbart News observed a 2012 Congressional Research Service study showing gun ownership jumped from 192 million privately owned guns in 1994 to 309 million in 2009. At the same time, the "firearm-related murder and non-negligent homicide" of 6.6 per 100,000 Americans in 1993 fell to 3.6 per 100,000 in 2000 and as far as 3.2 per 100,000 in 2011. A safe society is an armed society — numbers prove it.

Ranchos Students Take Awards at Madera County Academic Decathlon

By Kristi Winter

Liberty High School decathletes came home with 10 medals in this year's Madera County Academic Decathlon. Individual team members earned eight gold, four silver and three bronze medals.

Seven schools competed in this 10-

event competition answering questions based on the topic "Technology and Humanity."

"We are proud of all of our student decathletes for their dedication and determination to succeed," said Dr. Cecilia Massetti, Madera County Superintendent of Schools.

Decathlon teams are comprised of up to 25 members competing in three levels of competition: Honor (A), Scholastic (B) and Varsity (C) students.

A total of 127 medals were handed out at the awards ceremony. The top scoring senior from each school received a \$250 Pacific Gas and Electric Company Top Senior scholarship. Anthony Zinzun won for Liberty High School.

The Liberty High team members, led by coach Mike Erickson, were: Anya Estampa, Brayden Fischer, Isaiah Fraijo, Melissa Frandsen, Abigail Garrett, Juliana Gonzalez, Giovanni Guerrero, Logan Haines, Brandon Howard, Joseph Laurenti, Gunreet Mahil, Lissete Morales, Nathan Nguyen, Isabelle O'Neill, Ashley Ortiz, Elanah Prugh, Emma Riedinger, Arshbir Singh, Elena Somilleda, Emilio Somilleda, Vienna Vasquez, Elijah Witt and Anthony Zinzun.

The Madera County Academics De-

cathlon is funded by donations from local businesses and community members. The Madera County Schools Foundation proudly supports the event.

The 2024 Madera County Academic Middle School Pentathlon culminated with the Super Quiz and Awards Ceremony on Saturday, March 9 and Ranchos Middle School came in second place.

"Madera County's middle school pentathletes continually amaze us at the Pentathlon," said Dr. Cecilia Massetti. "They worked hard all year and studied countless hours, showed exceptional sportsmanship, team spirit and dedication throughout the contest. Our students did extremely well."

Ranchos Middle School and Wasuma Elementary School tied for third place.

"The Super Quiz is the only community event with the Pentathlon and it's very exciting to see parents and community

Please see **AWARD** on P. 17

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By Betty Van Valkenburg

READERS, CHOOSE YOUR OWN HEADLINE:

“Knowledge is power.”

“Know-nothing politicians have too much power.”

“Out of the mouths of politicians.”

“Politicians: Too much talk, not enough knowledge.”

Politicians of both political parties have the “gift of gab,” and much of the time their gab is without thoughtful reasoning or actual knowledge with which to back up their assertions. Much of the time their prattle is worthy of being ignored. Sometimes – or perhaps most of the time – it is self-serving and/or meaningless. Sometimes, of course, a politician who has done his or her homework and believes in limited government makes a useful proposal, but in too many cases politicians’ pet proposals may benefit a few while harming most Americans and/or the economy which affects every one of us.

Unfortunately, with today’s proliferation of “news” outlets – whether online, offline, printed, texted, e-mailed, televised, radioed, phoned or TikTok-ed – almost every crazy idea proposed by a politician can be publicized with approval or scorn, and with great fanfare. Sometimes, the more absurd the idea, the wider the coverage. From off-the-cuff remarks to the latest crazy iterations of the latest super-liberal politicians’ imaginations, a newscaster somewhere or



newscasters everywhere, with or without verifying facts or background, will announce each as newsworthy and either worthwhile or harmful. Without the facts and without using knowledge gained through research, thoughtful consideration and common sense as their guide, they tell us that boys can be girls, government needs more money, climate change is real, Americans can’t exist without government control, the border is closed, and more.

A prime example of the absurd is Congressman Bernie Sanders’ latest proposed bill requiring that employees work only 32 hours a week but continue to receive the same pay and benefits as they did for 40 hours. Most coverage from the liberal side of “journalism” praises this with enthusiastic support, but with no mention that adding astronomical employer costs for decreased employee productivity would surely result in layoffs, fewer hirings and increased consumer prices. And of course, they would surely cause some businesses to close, thus putting employees, whom Bernie claims to champion, out of jobs.

So, you may be saying to yourself, we know all that, so what’s the point? The point is that every-day Americans, of both Fox News and CNN persuasions and everything in between, need to study important issues carefully and make decisions and discuss opinions based on facts, figures, research and common sense. And then, without ranting or raving but with firm convictions, we might influence others, using rational opinions based on rational thought ... and tell politicians, courteously, what we want them to do, and why.

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Guest Editorial

Biden's War on Packaging

By Rich Lowry

Joe Biden has met the enemy, and it is smaller packaging for foodstuffs.

The White House is targeting the practice known as "shrinkflation," or companies keeping the nominal price of a product the same while decreasing the amount. This, naturally, is just another way of charging more. If the price is the same, but you're getting only 14 ounces of Wheat Thins instead of 16, you are paying more for your whole-wheat crackers.

President Biden slammed shrinkflation in a Super Bowl video featuring various offending snacks, including Doritos, Tostitos and Oreos. He called it a "rip off," and declared that "the American public is tired of being played for suckers." He may revisit the theme in his State of the Union address.

This has to rank as one of the most economically illiterate and juvenile presidential crusades in recent history.

Shrinkflation is a symptom of inflation, not a cause. And to the extent it is fooling anyone about higher prices, it is helping Biden, whose economic record

has been blighted by persistently high prices, especially for food.

A company that is raising its prices can either charge more or reduce the size of its product. What Biden is suggesting is that the former is the best option and companies should always increase their sticker prices.

If he were being cogent, Biden should have held up a bag of Doritos in his Super Bowl video and said, "I don't care what Frito Lay says -- this bag should be .50 ounces bigger and more expensive than it is now. How dare corporate America deal with the stubbornly high inflation the last few years by trying to hide from people how they are paying more for food."

One might think that the nation's chief executive would have more important things to worry about than the size of Gatorade bottles, but such is the White House's political desperation on food prices that nothing is too inane or nonsensical.

Of course, Biden's goal is to shift blame, yet complaining about smaller bags is only another way of complaining about higher prices. He might as well be pointing out that beef now costs an ungodly \$8 a pound, or that the price of baby food has increased nearly 9% over the past 12 months.

According to a report in The Wall Street Journal, consumers are spending the highest proportion of their disposable income on food since 1991.

The focus on shrinkflation is a variant of the corporate-greed argument advanced by Elizabeth Warren and other progressives. It maintains that inflation is an artifact of companies arbitrarily deciding to raise prices to boost their profits. There is a basic implausibility in this theory. It assumes that for several decades during the long period of low inflation in the U.S. corporations didn't use this pricing power. Then, they suddenly decided to wield it beginning in 2021, coinciding with a period of supply-chain disruptions, loose monetary policy and extravagant federal spending -- all of which one would expect to be drivers of inflation.

As for shrinkflation, even the consumer advocate who has been briefing the White House on this trend, Edgar Dworsky, admits that "these tactics tend

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Randy Bailey.....Publisher/Editor

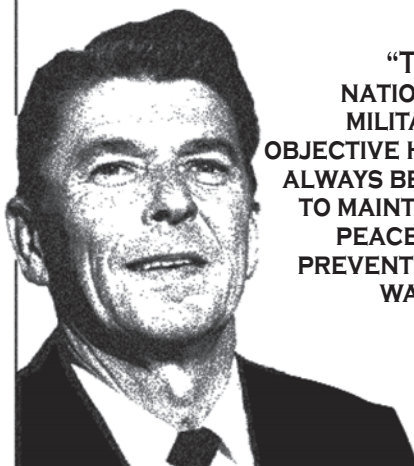
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Please see **LOWRY** on P. 9

Green Means ... Not so Fast ...

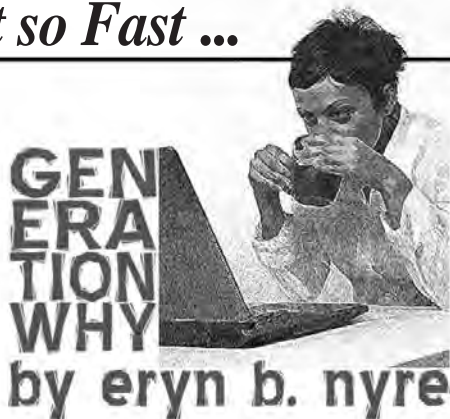
So ... I happen to be color blind. Not the, "I only see in grayscale," type but the, "I can't differentiate between shades," type. It's rare for a female and at times it's annoying, but I know I could have been dealt a much worse hand, so no complaints here. There are some funny stories, though.

As a quick background on my eyeballs and the severity of color blindness that I have, I'm what you would call "red-green deficient." I can see red but can't differentiate certain shades. Green, however, is basically a void. I usually see gray. Sometimes I see brown, like trees and grass are all one big lump of brown to me. Occasionally, I see yellow if someone is rocking some lime-green in my field of vision, but the bottom line is green is definitely not my color.

I'm writing this on St. Patrick's Day, so right away you can see where I'm going with this, right? Everyone dons their favorite shade of green and basically I'm

I'm what you would call "red-green deficient." I can see red but can't differentiate certain shades. Green, however, is basically a void. I usually see gray.

treated to what I imagine the world might look like if I did actually see only in grayscale, especially my Facebook feed. It's like the color just gets shut off at midnight. So, I thought I would be funny and post a black and white picture of a leprechaun captioned with, "Happy Everything is Green Day!" I figured most of the people wouldn't get the joke, but those that knew me well would have a little chuckle. I didn't expect to get a text from a friend, who knows I'm color blind, telling me that I posted a black and white picture and should take it down before I get embarrassed. Which was an amusing enough response, but she followed it up by telling me how color blindness works and that I should have at least been able to tell that picture was black and white. Well, thank you for the lesson, Louise. She was never really good at getting the joke, which is probably



why she so often is the joke, but I digress. As I cracked up at both her lack of a sense of humor and her audacity, I remembered another time someone who was not color blind tried to tell me what it was like being color blind.

Many years ago, back when I wore contacts, I was at my annual eye checkup to get my prescription renewed and seeing an optometrist I hadn't seen before. As my color blindness does have to do with my

eyes, I would always let a new provider know about my condition. Sitting in the chair, making the initial "nice to meet you" chit-chat, I told her I was color blind, red-green deficient.

To which she responded, women aren't color blind, but anyone can confuse colors from time to time, so that's probably what was happening. I really did think she was joking for a moment, but I suppose the look on my face made her feel the need to elaborate on how color is a spectrum and just because I see something as one shade, and someone else sees it as another, doesn't mean I'm color blind.

At the time I didn't think it was possible to be that condescending, dismissive, and yet wrong all at the same time, but having lived through both the 2016 and 2020 election cycles, I now know better. In any event, I told her I was quite certain women can be color blind as I am, demonstrably, a woman and had been diagnosed by a real medical doctor when I was a child. I even gave her the official diagno-

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

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GEN WHY cont. from P. 6

sis, deuteranopia, and explained to her the process I underwent as a little girl hoping she would see I wasn't just some weirdo wandering in off the street with some crazy story hoping to score those awesome new color blindness drugs that are all the rage these days.

She remained unconvinced. She grabbed a book from her shelf, opened it up and asked me to read off the numbers hidden inside the circles with the different colored dots. If you haven't seen these before, you can google them. They're interesting. I read off the numbers I could see, and then those I couldn't (which were in the green-red spectrum if you couldn't see that coming) I told her I couldn't see a number.

Visibly exasperated with me, she

pointed to one of the circles and asked if I really couldn't see the number "nine." So, I said, "Okay, it's a number nine." Triumphant she pronounced that she was right and I wasn't color blind. I realize at this point I should have just gotten up and left, but I was young and naïve and didn't think I was allowed to do that, so I persevered and reminded her that she had just told me the number. She stared at the book for what felt like at least a minute and finally pronounced, with the kind of arrogance only a doctor could muster, that I was color blind.

I think of that interaction often. It's not the only time I was told that I wasn't color blind, but it is the only time a doctor told me that it wasn't even possible. And today, when my friend texted me, all I could think was maybe she should have been an eye doctor.



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Out of Sorts? Sort it Out!

While walking through the Target parking lot, I overheard a young woman say to her friends, "I don't want to go home — I'm drowning in clean laundry and don't want to deal with it." She was feeling out of sorts.

Ever notice that when you're out of sorts, you probably need to sort something out? An out-of-sorts relationship needs time and attention to sort things out. When we're stressed about finances, we sort them out.

Dictionary.com defines "sort out" as finding a solution to a problem, to make clear or tidy, and to take or separate, as from a larger group.

We practice sorting as preschoolers. It's important in our cognitive development and helps us learn math and language. There are benefits, however, that go far beyond our early years.

I've made a career out of sorting. Playrooms, pantries, paper stacks, closets, cupboards and keepsakes. Piles on the counter and piles four feet deep. People feeling out of sorts about their environ-

ment come to me to help them sort things out.

Sorting isn't the only step in organizing, but it is foundational. Without it we fail to solve the problem. Here are four examples of sorting things out in your home.

Paper: We haven't yet achieved the "paperless society" predicted in the late 70s. Regardless of how much or little you have, you can sort all your paper into these four categories: recycle, shred, active and archive. This typically provides immediate relief from more than half your paper. Contact me for a Paper Retention Guide to help you with what to save, and a Piles to Files instruction sheet for active paperwork (info@organized-bychoice.com).

I've made a career out of sorting. Playrooms, pantries, paper stacks, closets, cupboards and keepsakes. Piles on the counter and piles four feet deep. People feeling out of sorts about their environment come to me to help them sort things out.

Pantries: Start with a macro sort, removing items that don't belong — stale or expired items, purchased but no longer desired, quantities above and beyond what you will use or what you have space for.

Usable items can be shared in the Blessing Box near the Ranchos Café. Next is the micro sort. Put items into categories — baking, canned foods, beverages, chips and crackers, sauces, breakfast foods, etc. Once they're sorted, they're much easier to find.

Playrooms: Macro-sort the items that don't belong. For example, toys that are outgrown, broken or worn out. Things that are never played with. Unnecessary multiples, and of course, items that belong somewhere else. Follow up with a micro

Please see **ORGANIZE** on P. 9

Vote for Four

(March 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.



by Jean Briner

1 ½ C heavy cream
1 ½ C whole milk
1-3 T sugar
1 small garlic clove, minced
¼ C parsley, chopped
½ - ¾ cup flour
1 to 2 shakes hot sauce
Salt and black pepper to taste

Cook bacon and onion in small amount of oil until onions turn slightly transparent. Add clams, cream, milk, potatoes, butter, thyme, bay leaves, garlic, sugar, salt, pepper to taste and cook for 20 to 30 minutes. Then add parsley, hot sauce and flour to get soup to desired thickness. Cook another 10 minutes and serve with sourdough bread or oyster crackers. Some ingredients have optional amount so you can make to your own taste.

Our main course is from Dusty Gauthier, wife of Frank Gauthier, candidate for Madera County Sheriff. I can remember my mom fixing a dish similar to this. Dusty said in her note that Frank grew up on this. The recipe came from both of his grandmothers.

Granny's Goulash

1 ½ Lbs. Hamburger
1 onion
1 tsp. salt
1 tsp. pepper
1 tsp. garlic salt
1 tsp. chili powder
1 tsp. seasoning salt
2 cans tomato sauce
2 cans tomato paste
1 can kidney beans
1 can kernel corn
2 cups small elbow noodles

Cook hamburger meat and onion until browned. Add spices, tomato sauce and tomato paste. Drain kidney beans and corn. Add to the meat and sauce mixture. In separate pot boil noodles per package directions.

Some recipes — and names — from the past share some family favorites that we tied into the political race of 2014.

A few months ago I was reading an article on the internet that told what each of our 44 presidents liked to eat. It was very interesting and I thought I might just do a column on it in a future issue of the Ranchos Independent. As our local political campaign becomes more active out here, I remembered that article and thought it would be fun to see what the candidates' families like to eat. An invitation was extended to each candidate, asking each of them to send their favorite recipe to be included in an issue of the paper before the election. When I showed Randy the first four recipes I received, he laughed and said, "This is perfect. You have a three course meal, with cookies for a snack later."

Here are the recipes I received, not necessarily in the order I received them, but in the order of our "meal." And remember: these may not be the way YOU prepare similar food, but it's the way these candidates said they like them. Enjoy!

Gary Johns, candidate for Supervisor in District 1, sent a recipe for our first course – my absolute favorite type of soup:

Gary's Monterey Chowder

2-6 ½ oz. cans chopped clams
1 small minced onion
4 slices bacon, diced
2-3 potatoes cubed
¾ cube butter
1-2 tsp. thyme
1-2 bay leaves

When cooked, drain and mix with the meat mixture. Put in a 9 x 13 baking dish. Sprinkle with cheese and bake in a 350 oven until cheese is melted.

When I read our dessert recipe, a pie recipe from **Jay Varney, also a candidate for Madera County Sheriff**, it really brought back the memories. When my sister (Randy's Mom) was going with Randy's Dad, our families (the Briners and Baileys) would get together for pot luck dinners on Sundays after church and on Thanksgiving. On Thanksgiving there would always be a chess pie since that was Mr. Bailey's (Randy's grandfather) favorite pie. Jay writes that this recipe comes from one of Amy's coworkers while they were in Dallas and they have been en-

joying it for the past 30 years.

Southern Chess Pie

3 whole eggs
1 T corn meal
2 T flour
½ tsp. vanilla
½ tsp. lemon flavor
3 T juice of fresh lemon
1 ¼ C sugar
½ C buttermilk
1 stick melted butter
1 deep dish pie shell

Beat eggs about 2 minutes. Then add remaining ingredients, mixing well. Pour into an unbaked deep-dish pie shell. Bake @ 350 for approx. 30-40 minutes until set.

I understand Jay also makes a mean batch of fudge.

Our snack for later comes from **Greg Noll, our third can-**

Please see **RECIPES** on P. 9

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RECIPES cont. from P. 8

didate for Sheriff. Who doesn't like chocolate chip cookies?

Rocky Mountain Chocolate Chip Cookies

Preheat oven to 350

1 C sugar

1 C light brown sugar

2 eggs

2 tsp. vanilla

2 T milk

1 stick butter

1 stick margarine

4 C flour

1 tsp. salt

1 tsp. baking powder

1 tsp. baking soda

1 bag chocolate chips

2 C oats

Mix together with a mixer the sugars, eggs, vanilla, milk, butter and margarine. Mix the flour, salt, baking powder and baking soda and add to butter and eggs mix, mixing well. Add the chocolate chips and oats by hand. Bake for approximately 8 – 12 minutes, depending if you prefer chewy or crunchy cookies. Will make 24 large or 36 small cookies.

I want to thank each of these candidates sincerely for their contributions to this column. I thought it was fun, I wish them well in the upcoming election and am looking forward to the next group.

LOWRY cont. from P. 5

drivers of inflation.

As for shrinkflation, even the consumer advocate who has been briefing the White House on this trend, Edgar Dworsky, admits that "these tactics tend to become more prevalent during times of high inflation," in the words of a CNBC report.

The causes of higher food prices, by the way, aren't a mystery. Why is the price of beef elevated? The supply of cattle has declined. What's up with the more expensive Oreos? Cocoa prices, The Wall Street Journal reports, recently passed a 46-year record. And labor costs have gone up with increases in the minimum wage in states across the country.

Still, The New York Times reports that the White House is considering new executive actions to crack down on shrinkflation. Assuming it's within the power of the presidency to influence the size of bags, boxes and bottles of food and drink, forcing them to stay larger would only render the underlying price increases more plain.

One might think that the nation's chief executive would have more important things to worry about than the size of Gatorade bottles, but such is the White House's political desperation on food prices that nothing is too inane or nonsensical.

Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review.

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ORGANIZE cont. from P. 7

sort to create zones for like things: books, dolls, cars, board games, video games, Legos, etc. If you continue to feel out of sorts, there's probably still too much stuff. Less is more when it comes to toys.

Closets: Macro-sort the items that don't belong (see the pattern?). Julie Morgenstern says, "Think of your closets as a place to 'retrieve' items rather than 'store' them." This means that the things that belong are the things you use, and the things that don't belong are the things you don't use. Once you have sorted out the items you don't use, micro-sort the

remainder into categories: household items, decorations, linens, etc. Depending on the quantity of items per category, micro-sort further. Sort decorations by holiday or season, linens by color, size, location used, etc.

I wanted to stop the young lady with the laundry issue and encourage her to "sort it out." Yes, even clean piles of laundry are easier to deal with when first sorted into smaller sections of underwear, socks, shirts, pants, etc.

When things are all mixed together it can seem overwhelming. Whatever has you feeling out of sorts in your home will become more manageable as you sort it out.

THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE

*Now acquaint yourself with Him, and be at peace;
thereby good will come to you.
Receive, please, instruction from His mouth,
and lay up His words in your heart.
If you return to the Almighty, you will be built up;
you will remove iniquity far from your tents.*

JOB 22: 21-23

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Senior Report

Spring Showers Bring May Flowers to the Madera Ranchos

By Melanie Williams

April is just around the corner and the next Monthly Saturday Sale is on April 6 from 8 a.m. to noon at the Ranchos/Hills Senior Center. We hope to see everyone out and enjoying a bright sunny day on the first Saturday in April.

It's been a wet, snowy season and this brings hope for many garden flowers to bloom in spring. Spring has sprung, so come have some fun at the Spring Fling Potluck Game Night at the Ranchos/Hills Senior Center on Thursday, April 11 at 5 p.m. The Spring Fling Potluck promises to bring in the joy of the April spring season. If you plan to attend the Potluck and Game Night, please call the Senior Center at 559-645-4864 for more details.

The Glorious Garden Tour is back this spring on Saturday, April 13. It is a self-guided tour of local gardens in the Madera area and the event is sponsored by the UC Master Gardener Program of Madera County and the Three Sisters Demonstration Garden at Madera Community College. The Ranchos/Hills Senior Center is volunteering to help sell tickets for this event. If you wish to purchase advance tickets to the Glorious Garden Tour, the Senior Center will have them available. The cost is \$25 for an adult and children 12 and under are free. You must have the exact dollar amount, or a check written out to Friends of the Three Sisters Garden to purchase tickets at the Senior Center.

Our first trip of 2024 is on Sunday, April 14 to the Golden Chain Theater in Oakhurst. We have a group from the Senior Center going to see the play, Fiddler on the Roof. You can still get tickets through the Golden Chain Theater website.

The Ranchos/Hills seniors are excited about our trip to visit the Veteran's Memorial Museum in Fresno. We are planning a tour of the museum on Saturday, April 27. The museum displays many authentic artifacts from WWII, the Korean War and the Vietnam War. Articles on display were donated to the Veteran's Memorial Museum from local retired veterans in the Central Valley. The museum is the "Home of the Legion of Valor" for Fresno. Members of the Legion of Valor have programs that support active-duty military personnel as well as veterans who have served our country. If you would like to attend with our senior group, please call the Senior Center by Thursday, April 25 to make reservations for the tour. Admission is free and transportation is not provided, but carpooling is encouraged.

The March Menu is out for the Senior Lunch Program at the Ranchos/Hills Senior Center. Senior hot lunches are free to all seniors 60 years and older in the community surrounding the Madera Ranchos. It is funded by the Fresno-Madera Agency on Aging. The organization suggests a donation of \$2.50 to help keep the program going in rural areas of Fresno and Madera Counties. It is a wonderful hot meal, and gathering with other seniors at lunch is a great opportunity for good conversation. The Ranchos/Hills Senior Center is one of the designated facil-

ities to host the Senior Lunch Program. Jaime is the person to contact at the Senior Center, so you can enroll in the program. She is available every day the Senior Center is open and is happy to meet new people who are interested in joining the Senior Lunch Program.



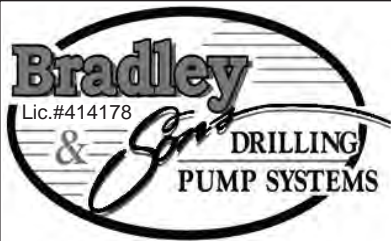
We welcome visitors and members to come any Thursday afternoon at 12:15 p.m. to enjoy activities like table games, cards and puzzles. Thursdays are open for sharing new experiences and having fun being together at the Ranchos/Hills Senior Center.

Brown Bag Day is on Wednesday, April 17 from 10 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. The Madera Food Bank is still taking applications for Brown Bag. If you are interested in participating in the Brown Bag Program, call the Ranchos/Hills Senior Center for an application and more information.

The Odd Fellows Breakfast is on Sunday, April 21. They serve hot breakfast anytime from 7:30 a.m. to

11 a.m. The cost is \$9 per person at the Odd Fellows building on Ave. 15 and Road 29 in Madera. If you would like to have a great homemade Sunday breakfast, come to the Odd Fellows Breakfast. The celebration of Earth Day is April 22.

Quote for April: "April is a gentle reminder that life's transformations are beautiful and inevitable." – Ellen Lovell



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The Garden Bug

Flowers for Easter

Lilies represent hope, love, divinity, purity and gratitude. Daffodils are one of the first signs of spring; they often symbolize romance. Tulips are another early sign of spring and the rebirth of the season after winter. They often indicate feelings of love. Daisies are considered cheerful, and are available in white, yellow, pink and purple. Hyacinths have incredible fragrance and showy, delicate blooms. – Brenda Weaver

Source: www.easternfloral.com

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Sierra Shadows 4-H

By Mikayla Carr

This month the Sierra Shadows 4-H had County Presentation Day. 4-H members of Madera County get together and share their presentations on various subjects and are judged on them. The Sierra Shadows 4-H members Emmie and Abbi Rosier, Landon Davis, and Jamey and Annalise Crandall, medaled gold and are moving on to Regionals, so be sure to congratulate the members who participated in this.

Moving on to the officers of the month, get ready to learn about the 2023-2024 Sierra Shadows recreation officers Micah Lee and Annalise Crandall. The recreation officers plan the games and activities to make the monthly club meetings even more exciting. Some of the games that they planned this year were musical chairs, egg spoon race and paper airplane race. These two officers work very hard and the club would not be the same without them.

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 Recreation Officers for 2023-2024 are, from left, : Annalise Crandall and Micah Lee . Also present is 4-H member Brooke Davis.

The Sierra Shadows 4-H club had a meeting on Tuesday, March 12 where the members had our meeting announcements and at the end of the meeting, a raffle.

Sierra Shadows member Jamey Crandall hosted a canned food drive. The members of 4-H, who went to the meeting, brought canned food donations to be taken to the Madera County Food Bank.

Coming up May 8-11 we have the Chowchilla Fair. At the Chowchilla Fair members of our 4-H enter items such as baked goods and crafts. They also enter small and large animals to be judged. Coming up this summer is our 4-H camp at Camp Keola. Members go to the mountains to enjoy fun activities like baking and arts and crafts. This is a really good experience to learn new things.

Small Animal Expo was also this month on Sunday, March 24. It included 4-H members of Madera showing off their knowledge of their small animals including chickens, rabbits, dogs and goats. The Large Animal Expo is the next event and it's scheduled for Sunday, April 21.

These are fun days for Sierra Shadows members since they can earn pins and medals. All members who enter their animals in this expo really enjoy it.

In honor of National Women's Month, we have a quote from Rosa Parks: "To bring change, you must not be afraid to take the first step. We will fail when we fail to try."

Golden Oak 4-H

By Wyatt Morgan

At the March meeting of the Golden Oak 4-H Club, two Emerald Star Program candidates, Griffin Williams-Smith and Hunter Williams-Smith, were interviewed. The Emerald Star program is designed for intermediate and senior 4-H members. In general, the Emerald Star Program's purpose includes:

1. Providing an opportunity for 4-H members to develop projects in their community or in 4-H beyond the club level.
2. Improving, creating, and expanding 4-H programs.
3. Helping individual 4-H members grow and improve in the areas of organization, leadership, and project planning.

This program is designed to help youth learn about project planning, organization and presentation. Typically, youth develop an action plan for



Golden Oak 4-H Emerald Star Project candidates, Hunter Williams-Smith and Griffen Williams-Smith.

Please see 4-H on P. 17

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The 31st Annual Flatlanders Day is Almost Here!



The 31st Annual Flatlanders Day Parade, sponsored by the Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce, is coming Saturday, May 18 beginning at 10 a.m. and will showcase local groups, businesses and individuals from the Ranchos and beyond. This year it will be held at Liberty High at the Stadium. There's a food and crafts fair that will be held at the High School as well that will last into the afternoon.

An entry form for the parade is to the right and applications for booths at the food and crafts fair are also available from the Chamber.

New Members

The Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce would like to welcome these new members to our business family

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The Butcher Boss
- Sherice Dabbs**
Slim Dilly Dogs
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2024 Flatlander's Day 3/24

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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 most closely suiting your entry):

- Horses (Single) Horses (Group) Explain: _____
- Band/Music 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: _____
- Vehicle Type: _____
- Novelty Name: _____
- Additional information: _____

Parade begins at 10 a.m. sharp! • Registration of entries begins at 8:30 a.m. • Parade route: Road 36 between Ardatth to Ave. 12 in front of Liberty High

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, fax or mail this form by **May 6** to: **Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce**
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Flatlanders is sponsored by the Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce.

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FLOAT TO SPECTATORS • IF YOU HAVE GIVEAWAYS YOU MUST WALK THE PARADE ROUTE

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The Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce would love to see you at our next meeting, always the second Wednesday of the month at 6 p.m., 37167 Ave. 12 Suite 5C in the Maywood Center. Come join us on April 10 and help plan the 31st Annual Flatlanders Day Parade. Call us at 645-4001.

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SEMUCU speaks

By Anthony Forestiere
Accountant for SEMCU

A Word to the Wise: Navigating the 2024 Tax Landscape includes some changes to IRS and California State tax laws.

As the calendar turns to 2024, taxpayers across the United States are bracing for changes in tax laws that could impact their financial planning and obligations. Both the Internal Revenue Service and individual state governments, including California, have adjusted their tax regulations, aiming to adapt to evolving economic landscapes and fiscal priorities. Let's delve into the significant changes taxpayers need to be aware of in 2024 regarding both federal and California state taxes.

Federal Tax Changes

1. Inflation Adjustments: The IRS typically adjusts tax brackets, standard

deductions and other tax-related figures annually to account for inflation. Taxpayers can expect these adjustments to continue in 2024, affecting their taxable income and overall tax liability.

2. Retirement Savings Contribution Limits: The contribution limits for retirement savings accounts such as 401(k)s, 403(b)s, and IRAs may see adjustments in 2024. These changes could influence individuals' retirement planning strategies and tax obligations.

3. Changes to Tax Credits and Deductions: Taxpayers should stay informed about alterations to tax credits and deductions, including those related to education expenses, childcare costs, and energy-efficient home improvements. Keeping abreast of these modifications can help individuals maximize their tax savings.

4. Enhanced Enforcement Efforts: The IRS continues to prioritize enforcement efforts to ensure taxpayer compliance. Taxpayers should be vigilant in accurately reporting their income and complying with tax laws to avoid potential penalties and audits.

California State Tax Changes

1. Progressive Taxation Adjustments: California's progressive tax system may see adjustments in 2024,

affecting taxpayers across different income brackets. Changes in tax rates and income thresholds could impact individuals and businesses alike.

2. Focus on Environmental Initiatives: California often leads the nation in implementing environmental initiatives, and tax policies are no exception. Tax incentives and credits related to renewable energy investments, green technology adoption and environmental conservation efforts may undergo changes to encourage sustainable practices.

3. Updates to State Tax Credits and Deductions: Similar to federal tax laws, California's state tax credits and deductions may experience revisions in 2024. Taxpayers should remain informed about changes that could impact their eligibility for credits and deductions, such as those for education expenses, healthcare costs and charitable contributions.

4. Increased Scrutiny on High-Income Earners: High-income earners in California may face heightened scrutiny from state tax authorities. Compliance efforts targeting wealthy individuals and businesses aim to ensure fair taxation and address potential instances of tax evasion or avoidance.

Navigating the intricacies of tax laws, whether at the federal or state

level, requires vigilance and awareness of the latest updates and changes. As taxpayers prepare their financial affairs for 2024, staying informed about IRS regulations and California state tax laws is paramount. Seeking guidance from tax professionals and leveraging available resources can help individuals and businesses navigate the complexities of the tax landscape and make informed decisions to optimize their financial well-being while fulfilling their tax obligations.

Please join SEMCU in making a difference and improving our community. We invite our community members to participate in our initiatives. We always welcome new board members from our community. Together we can build a stronger, more vibrant community.

SEMCU meets only once a month for about an hour at 6 p.m. on the third Tuesday of every month at the Ranchos Library at 37398 Berkshire Dr. Or you may attend by going online to www.semcu.org for the link and simple instructions. You may also phone in by calling 669-900-6833 then enter ID# 83632424343 followed by code 854221.

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Kiwanis Korner

Kiwanis Name Change Looming

By Sally Rowden

Springtime is approaching. Our Spring Raffle has been underway. If you haven't purchased a raffle ticket, you'll want to do so very soon as Thursday, March 28 is the day we draw the winning ticket. You could win a bucketful of sweet bunny goodies and a large stuffed "Squishmallow" named Keisha. You can reach out to Sally Rowden at 559-908-7073 for raffle tickets. Call or text.

I want to acknowledge and briefly highlight our guest speakers in the last few months. Supervisor Jordan Wamhoff was our guest speaker in December.



Jim Horton explains the foundation he created in memory of his late son. He talked to the Ranchos Kiwanis about the Zachary Horton Foundation – Breaking The Stigma of Addiction.

He shared information regarding the possibility of a community park being established, traffic safety happenings, CHP officer coverage and unhoused/homeless individuals. For me, the statistic of 77,000 vehicles passing through Hwy. 41 and Avenue 12 a day was astounding.

In January, the Madera Community College Athletic Coordinator, Kristen Mattox, shared time with us. Lots of exciting happenings in all areas of sports. Eleven of the students are qualifying for the Kiwanis Torch of Excellence. This is an event partnered between the State Center Community College Districts and the Kiwanis Clubs of District 5. Student-athlete's academic achievements are celebrated along with their athletic achievements.

Sally Moreno, our own Madera County District Attorney, visited us in February. She gave us valuable information regarding the initiative called "The Homelessness, Drug Addiction and Theft Reduction Act." DA Moreno in collaboration with other DAs in California are attempting to correct Prop 47. They are hoping to add this measure to the November ballot. For more information go to casafecommunities.com

This month Jim Horton, a Kiwanis member from the Clovis Club, was our guest speaker. He and his wife established the Zachary Horton Foundation. This foundation provides complete informational resources related to substance use disorder. Their son, Zachary John, passed away suddenly from an opioid addiction. A situation in which fentanyl became unexpectedly involved. Jim gave a passionate presentation along with teaching us about Narcan usage, and how to administer and keep Narcan readily available. Thank you to two of our Golden Valley School Board Trustees, Steve Lewis and Andy Wheeler, for giving their time to be in attendance.

Madera Ranchos Kiwanis

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venmo

Another huge thank you to the attendees of the Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce Crab Feed. As your servers, your generous tipping granted us \$526. The monies will support The John Minney – Liberty High School – Scholarship Fundraiser for our graduating seniors. We are continuing our fundraising efforts through May. See our Venmo QR Code for donations. We would also like to thank the following individuals and/or businesses that have currently donated: Britz/Sun West; Mr. John Minney; Pistorosi Ambulance; and Wight Water Pool Service and Supplies.

In the months to come you'll find us at the following two community

Please see **KIWANIS** on P. 17

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KIWANIS cont. from P. 16

events: The Webster Elementary School Carnival on Friday, April 19, presented by the Webster Parent Club. It is well underway to provide a fun-filled time. Then on Saturday, May 18 it's Flatlander's Day and Parade at the Liberty High School campus. Another event that will be exciting to attend. Mark your calendars.

The Kiwanis Club of Madera Ranchos is in the process of changing its name. With the Eastern Madera growth

of Riverstone and Tesoro Viejo, along with our continued growth in our many existing areas, we want to have an identity for all. We are asking that you share your name change ideas with us by emailing Sally Rowden at rowden-sally2@gmail.com We will keep you updated in the continuing publications of The Independent.

We hope for all celebrating this Easter Sunday that you have an egg-sra special celebration and enjoy the sweetness of the day.

www.RanchosKiwanis.com

4-H cont. from P. 11

some type of multi-county event which they then organize and facilitate. After completion and presentation of their project, they are awarded with the Emerald Star ranking.

Both candidates were asked a series of eight questions, which are listed here along with their responses.

1. Can you briefly describe what you are doing to get your Emerald Star?

Griffin: Making a goat book for equipment identification.

Hunter: Making a booklet on poultry showmanship and how to study for it.

2. Why is this something you want to achieve?

Griffin: To get all of my stars.

Hunter: To complete all of my stars.

3. Who is this important for?

Griffin: Myself.

Hunter: For new people getting into poultry.

4. Why is this important for them?

Griffin: So I could complete all my

stars.

Hunter: Because I wish I had this information and opportunities when I was new.

5. Who or What inspired you to try and earn this?

Griffin: My Mom, so I could complete all my stars.

Hunter: My Mom inspired me.

6. Why did that inspire you?

Griffin: So I could complete all my stars.

Hunter: Because I thought it would be an interesting thing to achieve

7. Why did you want to do this certain project to earn your Emerald Star?

Griffin: Because I have worked with goats for a while and I want to teach others.

Hunter: Because I wish I had this information.

8. What advice would you give to members who are trying to get their Emerald Star?

Griffin: Focus on why you want to complete your project.

Hunter: Think of something that you didn't have and give it to others.

AWARD cont. from P. 3

members cheer for their team," said Tricia Protzman, Deputy Superintendent, Madera County Superintendent of Schools "The enthusiasm displayed by pentathletes and spectators is incredible."

This year teams consisted of a combination of 7th and 8th grade students. Individual medals for each subject were handed

out based on grade level. Each team consisted of up to 25 students. Students had to compete in all five events to earn medals. Teams had been practicing for this event since October.

The Academic Pentathlon is sponsored by Madera County Superintendent of Schools and the Madera County Schools Foundation and supported by community donations.

VOTE cont. from P. 2

Wood had 23 percent. If no one wins 50 percent plus one, there will be a runoff between the top two on May 21. The AP declared that Fong has advanced. At stake is a head start on seniority in the U.S. House, plus a likely expansion of the slim GOP

majority.

Most of the nine candidates on the special election ballot are the same as the 11 who ran in the March 5 primary. In that top-two race, Fong, with 42 percent of the vote, and Boudreaux, with 24 percent, advanced to November for the full two-year term that starts in January.

Americanisms



“Shallow men believe in luck. Strong men believe in cause and effect.”
— Ralph Waldo Emerson

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• Andrew Jackson's parrot was kicked out of his funeral for swearing.

• In 1947, The New York Times opined that "the pizza could be as popular a snack as the hamburger if Americans only knew more about it."

• Buzz Aldrin's mother's maiden name was Moon.

• When pirate Richard Worley, captain of the New York's Revenge, captured his second ship, he named it the New York Revenge's Revenge.

• Wisconsin is known as the Badger State because the area's lead miners used to spend winters in tunnels burrowed into hills -- like badgers.

• Jim Carrey was the first actor to have three number one movies in one year.

• The Palais Ideal in France was built entirely of stones that a postman named Ferdinand Cheval picked up on his mail route.

• Honey hunters in Mozambique use special calls to recruit the services of birds known as honeyguides. The birds lead the humans to bees' nests, and in return, they get the leftover beeswax.

• In 1964, a pre-fame 17-year-old David Bowie was interviewed on the BBC program "Tonight" as the founder of The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Long-Haired Men.

• Thomas Edison nicknamed two of his kids Dot and Dash after the Morse code signals.

• Army ants that misinterpret the scent trails left by other ants will sometimes break from the crowd and march in circles. If enough ants join them, they can form massive "death spirals."

• John Quincy Adams was an avid skinny-dipper who included dips in the Potomac River as a regular part of his exercise regimen.

• Crayola came from the words for "oily chalk."

• The U.S. Senate's Rule XIX states that U.S. senators cannot insult their colleagues.

Thought for the Day: "Leaders can let you fail and yet not let you be a failure." -- Stanley McChrystal

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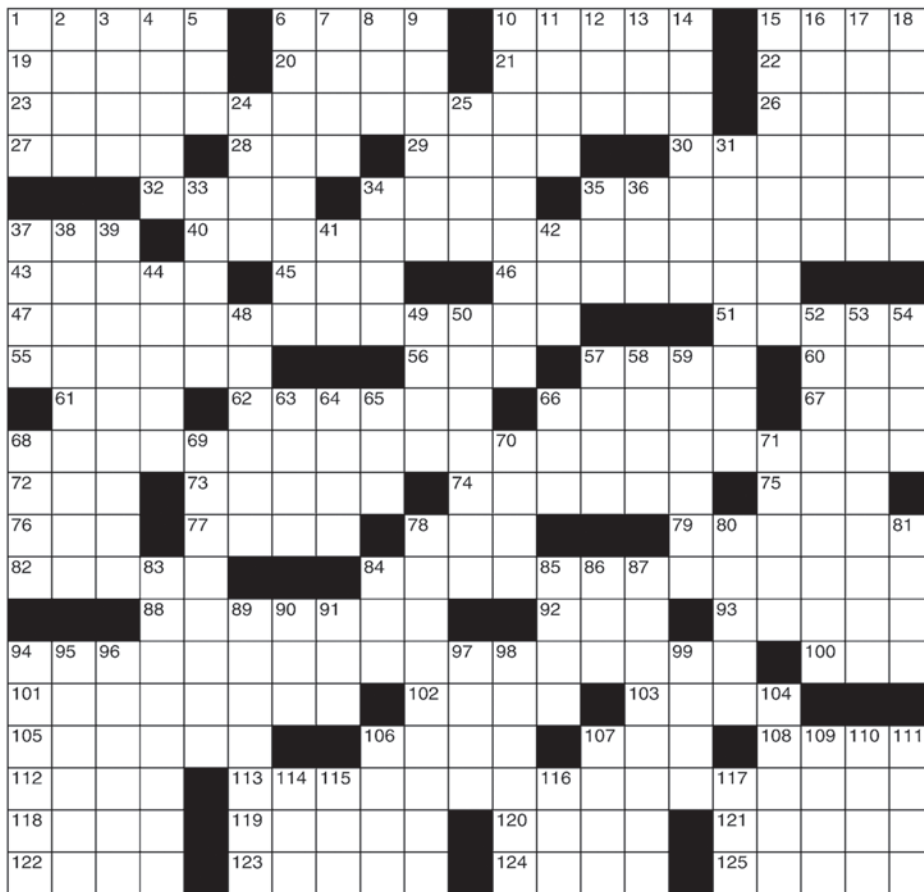


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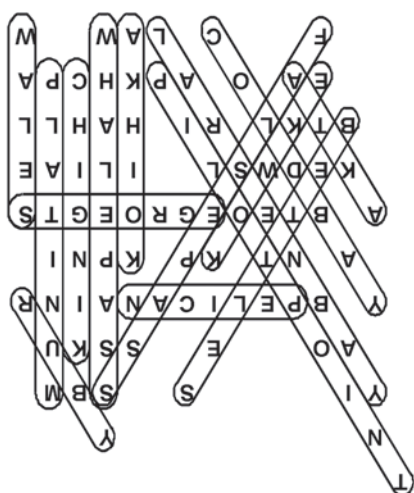
Super Crossword



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ANSWERS

4	=	60	=	16
3	+	4	-	5
6	+	8	-	9
1	+	7	÷	2



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

TELEVISION	DEAL	NOM	SG
SALAD	SE	U	L
AGUA	ANY	FL	ED
HANNDEL	SA	N	W
GENOVESE	BO	E	R
ANATOLIA	Y	A	N
PREMIUM	A	P	R
ATEUP	H	U	A
EFEG	P	R	E
LOD	A	E	T
PRELIMINARY	I	N	I
TARTAN	L	A	M
RANCH	C	H	M
FLO	T	I	E
YEAH	D	A	N
MASK	C	T	R
PIRETS	A	T	E
TAXES	N	I	R
INAPPT	A	H	M
WHIMS	W	H	I
CHAS	C	H	A

- ACROSS**
- 1 Not suitable
 - 6 "Sorry to intrude ..."
 - 10 Capricious ideas
 - 15 Cartoonist Addams, informally
 - 19 Payments to the IRS
 - 20 Oscar winner Robert De —
 - 21 Capital of Vietnam
 - 22 Sword handle
 - 23 Fifth Avenue skyscraper
 - 26 Other, in Acapulco
 - 27 Identity hider
 - 28 Altitudes: Abbr.
 - 29 — -C (PC copy command)
 - 30 What a groom may toss
 - 32 "Uh-huh"
 - 34 Pioneer Boone, informally
 - 35 Orthodox Jewish movement
 - 37 Rapper — Rida
 - 40 Technique for viewing a slow process quickly
 - 43 Cattle farm ideas
 - 45 Prefix with nourished
 - 46 In a daze
 - 47 First first lady of the U.S.
 - 51 Gets close to
 - 55 Sesame seed paste
 - 56 Pucksters' org. with the Calder Cup
 - 57 Newspaper think piece
 - 60 Born as
 - 61 Toon sheet
 - 62 Hedy of "Ecstasy"
 - 66 Rome's — Fountain
 - 67 Dollar bill
 - 68 Advance inquiry into a crime, e.g.
 - 72 Israeli city close to Ben Gurion Airport
 - 73 Big name in life insurance
 - 74 Decrease
 - 75 Doc for the neck up
 - 76 D-H linkup
 - 77 FDR or HST
 - 78 Former "Idol" judge
 - 79 Bob of play-by-play
 - 82 Wolfed down
 - 84 Launching of people into orbit
 - 88 Insurance payment
 - 92 "The Simpsons" shopkeeper
 - 93 Was overlong
 - 94 Dual-focus course
 - 99 About bodily structures
 - 100 Some kitchen appliances, for short
 - 101 From a northwest Italian port
 - 102 Certain South African
 - 103 Arena level
 - 105 "Hallelujah Chorus" composer
 - 106 Rough-wood
 - 107 City vehicle
 - 108 Gas brand
 - 112 Water, in Acapulco
 - 113 What love is, per a Four Aces #1 tune, with "a"
 - 118 Crate piece
 - 119 Capital of South Korea
 - 120 Actress Best
 - 121 Really mad
 - 122 The "T" of 66-Down
 - 123 Day divisions
 - 124 Bargain
 - 125 Restaurant notice that's applicable to this puzzle's seven longest answers?
 - 18 Tempestuous
 - 24 Spicy cuisine
 - 25 — Reader (magazine)
 - 31 Carrier based in New Delhi
 - 33 Hawk of film
 - 34 Salvador of surreal art
 - 35 Spicy
 - 36 From — Z
 - 37 Sig Nu, e.g.
 - 38 Video game tomb raider
 - 39 Teetering
 - 41 — -di-dah
 - 42 Attila follower
 - 44 Refrigerate
 - 48 More artful
 - 49 — a soul
 - 50 "— in Manila" (Ali-Frazier fight)
 - 52 Consecrating
 - 53 Nevada airport
 - 54 In view
 - 57 Mining finds
 - 58 Sampras of the court
 - 59 Show plainly
 - 63 Poker cost
 - 64 Supplies with personnel
 - 65 Coach Parseghian
 - 66 LG or RCA products
 - 68 Petition
 - 69 "Thumbs-up!"
 - 70 Gas in signs
 - 71 Gasless car
 - 78 Tipoffs in hoops, e.g.
 - 80 Christie's "A Pocket Full —"
 - 81 Depots: Abbr.
 - 83 Not old-fashioned
 - 84 Cabinet dept. since 1965
 - 85 Twosome
 - 86 Abbr. on military mail
 - 87 Societal
 - 89 It might have mascara on it
 - 90 Pas' mates
 - 91 Opal ending
 - 94 Horror-struck
 - 95 All-Star pitcher Denny
 - 96 Yearly
 - 97 Gordie of hockey
 - 98 Itched (for)
 - 99 Seine feeder
 - 104 Trendy again
 - 106 Stimulate
 - 107 — fide
 - 109 Phony
 - 110 Creates a lap
 - 111 Blood type, for short
 - 114 Prefix with pagan
 - 115 Part of TTYL
 - 116 HST follower
 - 117 Loud noise

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- Use a muffin pan to make cookie cups for ice cream or fruit. Just flip your muffin pan over and press dough over the upturned wells. It will puff up a little, but once it settles, they make very nice bowls. I do this with pizza dough as well. Prebake for a few minutes to form the bowl, then fill with ingredients and complete baking.

- If you can put a tension rod in the cabinet under your sink, you can use it to hang spray bottles for extra storage. It's amazing how much space clears up, and it's easy to find the bottle you need.

- Got popcorn? For a healthier (and much less expensive) version, go old-school: Put popping corn kernels in a regular brown paper bag, seal the bag, then microwave.

- "Bread tags (the little plastic clips that hold bread bags closed) make great cord organizers when you are using a multiple outlet power strip. Write the kind of device (e.g. TV, Xbox, cable box) on the tag, then clip it to the plug end of the cord. When you need to unplug, it'll be easy to see which is which." -- C.C. in Ohio

- Travel a lot? Make use of those shower caps by pairing up shoes and using the shower cap to hold them together while simultaneously protecting your clothes from the shoe bottoms. Smart!

- "I make plenty of cupcakes for my children's various events, but I kept having unreturned cupcake carriers. Those things are expensive! I make my own now, using a box lid. The lids for paper cartons work really well. Cut a cross into the lid top with a razor or carpet knife, and press down. Make it the size of a cupcake. Insert cupcakes and go." -- A.R. in Georgia

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.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

	+		÷		= 4
+		+		+	
	+		-		= 5
-		×		+	
	+		-		= 2
=		=		=	
4		60		16	

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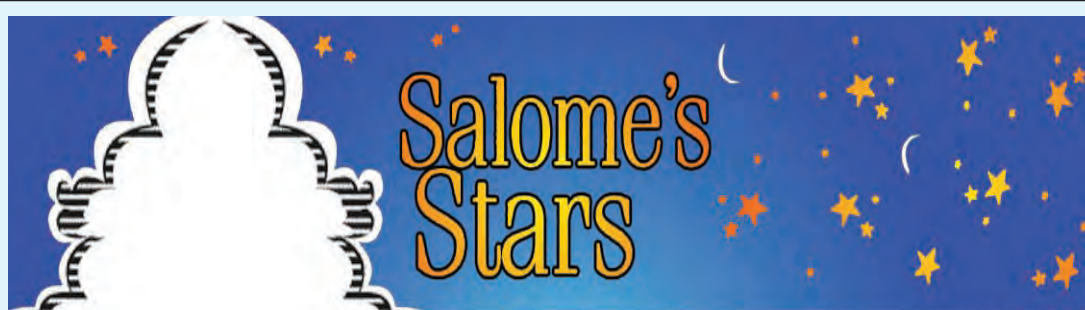
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GRIN and BEAR IT by Wagner



"There would be no energy shortage if we could harness road rage!"



ARIES (March 21 to April 19) Congratulations, Lamb. The end of the month brings good news in the workplace, thanks to all the efforts you've made to get your projects off the ground and running.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20) Don't let yourself be cowed into thinking that you're not up to the challenge you've taken on. Keep reinforcing your self-confidence. No one and nothing can stop you.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20) Positive responses to a recent workplace move should give you the added assurance that you're on the right track. Celebrate the good news with family and/or friends.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22) There's still a little emotional fuzziness you have to work through before you can feel really certain about your recent decisions. But you're on the right track. Stay with it!

LEO (July 23 to August 22) You're tempted by an offer that seems close to what you've been looking for. But before you pounce on it, see if you can coax out some added perks to sweeten the deal.

VIRGO (August 23 to September 22) Your efforts to settle a volatile situation should prove to be successful. Now could be a good time to analyze what might have created the problem in the first place.

LIBRA (September 23 to October 22) A once-close associate reemerges with news that could cause you to reconsider a recent decision. But don't make a move before consulting a trusted adviser.

SCORPIO (October 23 to November 21) You might feel pressured to reveal a colleague's secret. But you can rely on your strong Scorpion sense of rectitude to help you continue to do the right thing.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22 to December 21) A pesky situation is still creating problems. But you are moving ahead with it, and it should soon be successfully resolved in your favor.

CAPRICORN (December 22 to January 19) A spate of indecision leaves you susceptible to doubt. But you'll soon regain your emotional sure-footedness and be back leading the way as usual.

AQUARIUS (January 20 to February 18) Love rules the week with new romances favored for single Aquarians looking for partners. Cupid also targets renewed commitment for wedded Water Bearers.

PISCES (February 19 to March 20) A surge of creativity keeps you happily busy through the week. But set aside some quiet time to share with loved ones. Some long-awaited news finally comes through.

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FUN PAGES

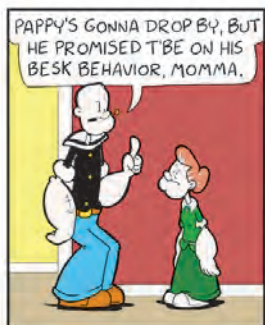
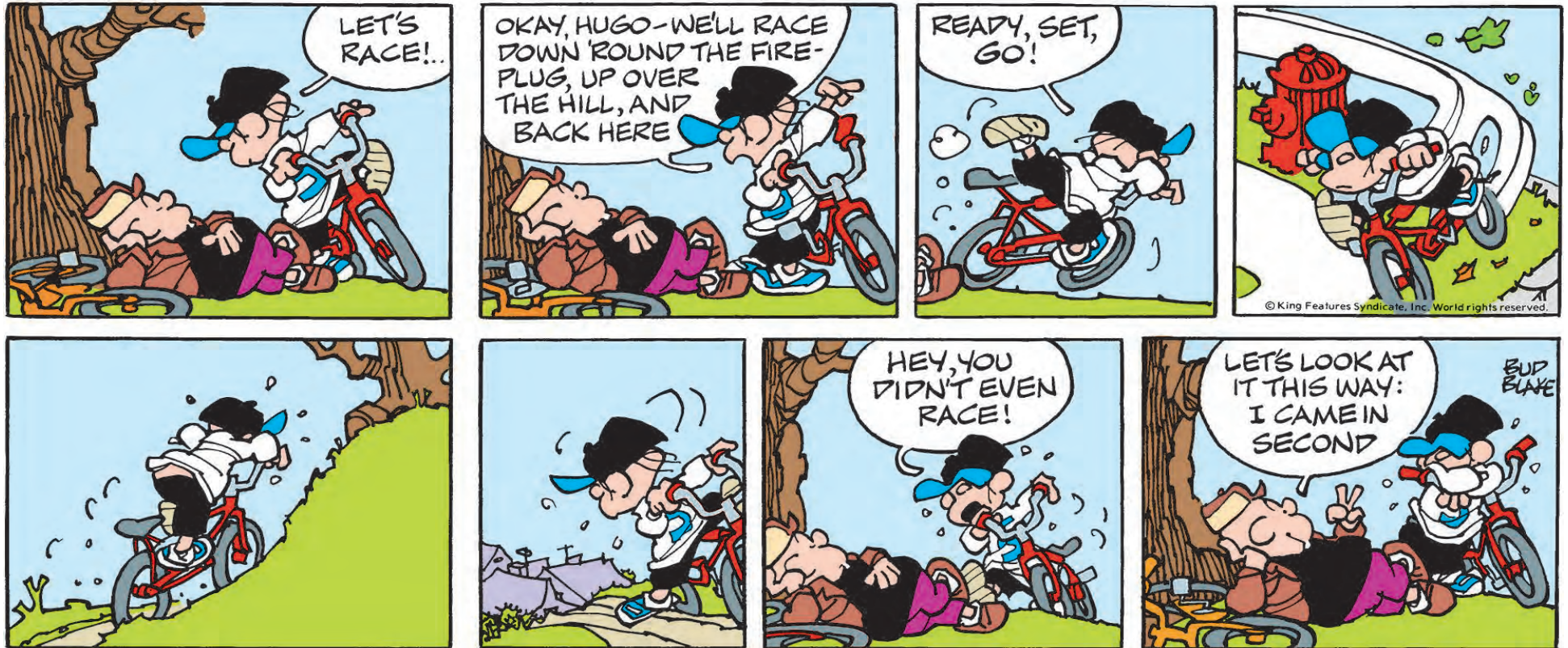
Kids' Maze



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by BUD BLAKE

TIGER



TRIVIA TEST

By Fifi Rodriguez

1. **GENERAL KNOWLEDGE:** Which large U.S. city is nicknamed Rip City? 2. **MOVIES:** Which movie features the quote, "She doesn't even go here!" 3. **GEOGRAPHY:** Which national capital city is the northernmost in the world? 4. **TELEVISION:** Which long-running sitcom features a dad named Phil Dunphy? 5. **GAMES:** In chess, how many knights does each player have at the beginning? 6. **GEOL- OGY:** What natural phenomenon is associated with igneous rock? 7. **LANGUAGE:** How many official languages are in the United Nations? 8. **MUSIC:** David Grohl was a drummer in which band before he became the frontman for the Foo Fighters? 9. **ANIMAL KINGDOM:** What is a group of alligators called? 10. **FOOD & DRINK:** What kind of meat is used in Hasenpfeffer, a traditional German stew?

1. Portland, Oregon.
2. "Mean Girls."
3. Reykjavik, Iceland.
4. "Modern Family."
5. Two.
6. Volcanic eruption.
7. Six.
8. Nirvana.
9. A congregation.
10. Rabbit.

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Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps



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by Jeff Pickering



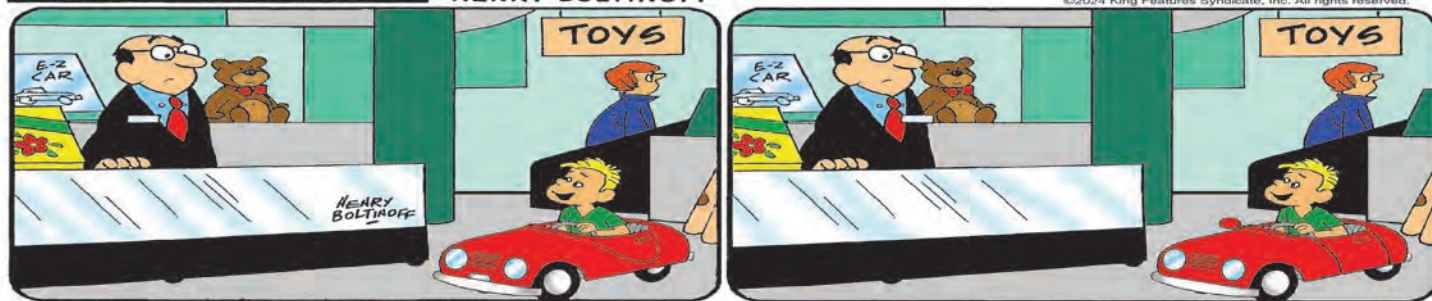
Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas



HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINGOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels. Differences: 1. Car door is different. 2. Rear tire is missing. 3. Side mirror is added to car. 4. Teddy bear is moved. 5. Nametag is moved. 6. License plate is missing.

SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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

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 W V K E D W S L T R I L I A E
 Q O B T K L N R I L H A H L L
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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: LARGE BIRD OF PREY

- Akhiok Cold Bay Pelican St. George
- Atka Ekwok Pilot Point Wales
- Bettles False Pass Platinum Whale Pass
- Chignik Larsen Bay Ruby

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