

# The Ranchos Independent



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Volume 19 Issue 5 2023

The Official Publication of Southeastern Madera County

50¢

## Madera County tries to stop the bleeding

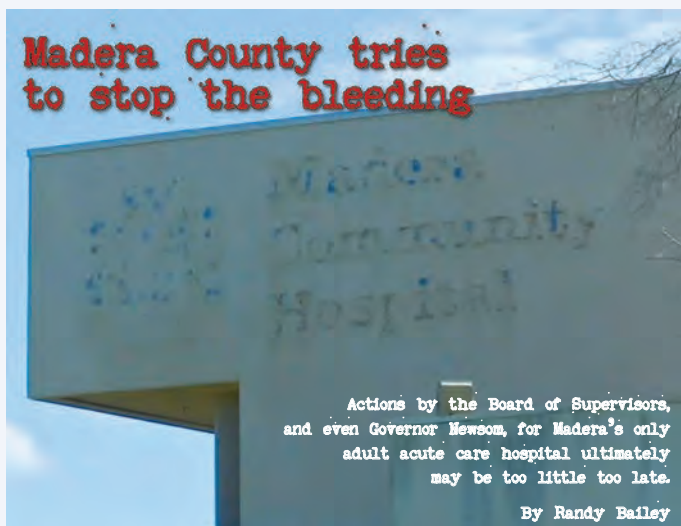
Actions by the Board of Supervisors,  
and even Governor Newsom, for Madera's only  
adult acute care hospital ultimately  
may be too little too late.

By Randy Bailey

### *In This Issue*

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## Madera County tries to stop the bleeding



When Madera Community Hospital filed for bankruptcy and closed in January of this year, many thought that was the end. But many Madera County officials knew there was something else on the horizon. For the hospital to remain as a viable option for another medical group to possibly acquire it and begin providing services again, it was crucial that Madera Community Hospital retain its licensing and certification fees to the state of California. Without current licensing, any potential suitor for the hospital would have to start at “square one,” possibly incurring an entirely new and different – and perhaps more costly – set of needs and demands compared to what are already in place.

“The bottom line is that if it’s going to reopen as an acute-care hospital, that licensing is very important, and I think it would be a reasonable commitment on behalf of the County to pay for that licensing,” Madera County Administrative Officer Jay Varney said at the May 9 Board of Supervisors’ meeting.

The hospital’s license is currently in suspense and set to expire on May 26, but California hospital regulatory officials have shown a degree of flexibility to allow Madera County the ability to find an option to reopen. After Varney’s admonition,

one week later on May 16 the Supervisors unanimously approved \$100,000 in federal COVID-19 recovery funds to cover license renewal costs for the hospital. Varney said that the vote will allow Madera County to set aside \$100,000 in American Rescue Plan Act – COVID-19 – money until the state finally makes a formal request for the license fee.

The California Department of Public Health said that licensing and certification fees for a general acute-care hospital are \$828 per licensed bed, giving Madera Community Hospital’s 106 beds a bill for \$87,768 just for license renewal.

Interestingly, the day before, Governor Gavin Newsom signed the Distressed Hospital Loan Program. This legislation provides interest-free loans for public and non-profit hospitals in the same boat that Madera Community found itself. It is structured to prevent local hospitals from closing, or to help closed hospitals to reopen. It does this by making up to \$150 million available from the state’s general fund for a loan program that will be available through the end of 2031.

After voting to spend \$100,000 to pay state licensing fees, the Board then decided to hire a consulting company to look at potential options for resurrecting the hospital. The Board opted to go with Force 10 Partners, LLC – but at a price. At the time of the agreement the contract had no set amount, but was estimated to be somewhere between \$400,000 and \$440,000.

The Distressed Hospital Loan Program, or AB 112, was created specifically “... to provide zero-interest cash flow loans to nonprofit or public hospitals experiencing extreme financial distress.” It is intended that the loans will help struggling hospitals stay open or recently closed hospitals to open again.

“This new program will help hospitals in extreme financial distress get the assistance they need as quickly as possible,” said Governor Newsom.

The legislation was the result of collective work between the Governor’s Office, California Health and Human Services Agency and the Department of Health Care Access and Information. Cumulatively they worked with the California Health Facilities Financing Authority and the California Legislature to develop the program.

## “Hateful” Activity? Snitch on Neighbors

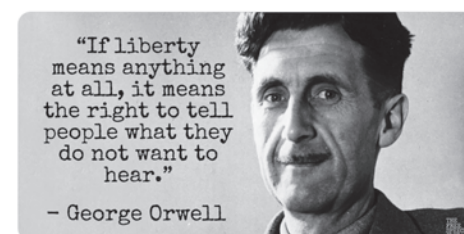
By Jeff Charles

Here’s another example of leftists being authoritarian under the guise of trying to protect marginalized groups. California has rolled out a program ostensibly designed to stop hate crimes and other acts of bigotry.

How?

By creating a hotline allowing residents to snitch on one another for engaging in “hateful” activity.

The program, which is called “California vs Hate,” is “a non-emergency hate incident and hate crime reporting system to support individuals and communities targeted for hate,” according to its website. The state legislature provided funding to its Civil Rights Department to establish the initiative. This program is intended to support victims of hate by giving them “options for next steps after an act of hate,” “connect people targeted for hate with culturally competent resources and care coordination services,” and “improve hate incident and crime reporting data to enhance prevention and response.”



On its “Frequently Asked Questions” page, the program defines a “hate incident” as “a hostile expression or action that may be motivated by bias against another person’s actual or perceived identity.” Examples of a hate incident can include: “derogatory name calling, bullying, hate mail and refusing service.” Readers are encouraged to report these incidents by phone through a hotline or from its website. The group claims it “is not run by the police” and that it does not send any information to law enforcement without the person’s consent. The program will “identify civil legal options that don’t involve the criminal legal system, both through the Civil Rights Department and other agencies.”

After a caller reports a hate incident, they are “connected with a professional trained in culturally competent communication and trauma-informed practices,” who will make sure they provide access to resources including “legal, financial, mental health and mediation services.”

Please see **SNITCH** on P. 9

Click on “Local News” at

## Ranchos Man Going to Trial for Sex Trafficking

A Ranchos man first reported on in the August 2020 issue of the Ranchos Independent on suspicion of sex trafficking, is finally going to trial. A Madera County judge has determined there is enough evidence for Dylan Dobbs to stand trial.

According to the article at the time, Dylan Colby Nichols Dobbs, who was then 27, was arrested in Madera County by the Madera County Sheriff’s Office on July 29, 2020 and was held on \$1,025,000 bail for charges of human trafficking, possession of ammunition by a prohibited person, financial elder abuse, grand theft and probation violations.

At the time, it was alleged that Dobbs abused and coerced a 22-year-old woman for the purposes of sex trafficking, as well as potentially other women and girls as far away as the San Francisco area and Las Vegas. Detectives believed Dobbs arranged his contact with potential victims



Dylan Colby Nichols Dobbs, 30, is going to trial for charges of human trafficking and other offenses.

through social media.

At that time, the Sheriff’s Office said

that Dobbs had a history of offenses involving weapons, domestic violence and drugs.

At the pre-trial hearing, Madera County Deputy District Attorney Spenser Wagner presented the evidence against Dobbs while Dobbs was represented by Defense Attorney Martin Taleisnik.

Arresting Madera County Deputy Sheriffs were interviewed about the events of that day three years ago. The officers related items that were found in the suspect’s car, including, “... several cell phones and tablets ... [and] a loaded magazine with nine live rounds.” One Deputy testified that “... there was marijuana as well as what appeared to be wax.”

The judge ultimately ruled there was enough evidence for the case to go to trial and Dobbs remains in custody. The judge determined that Dobbs will be back in court on June 2, 2023, to set a date for the trial.



### Wise Words

By Betty Van Valkenburg

It is hoped that this column, espousing conservative policies and values, has dropped a few pearls of wisdom along the way. In this world gone completely mad, this writer's "jewelry box" is devoid of any pearls, but here are some quotes from two of our greatest presidents that, while wise, are also thought provoking, clever, amusing – and apropos to this very day.

**Quotes of George Washington, President from April 30, 1789 to March 4, 1797:**

*If the freedom of speech is taken away, then dumb and silent we may be led, like sheep to the slaughter.*

*Truth will ultimately prevail where there is pains to bring it to light.*

*The Constitution is the guide which I never will abandon.*

*To be prepared for war is one of the most effective means of preserving peace.*

*The basis of our political system is the right of the people to make and to alter their constitutions of government.*

**Quotes of Ronald Reagan, President from January 20, 1981, to January 20, 1989:**

*We will always remember. We will always be proud. We will always be prepared, so we will always be free.*

*Republicans believe every day is the Fourth of July, but the democrats believe every day is April 15.*

*We don't have a trillion-dollar debt because we haven't taxed enough. We have a trillion-dollar debt because we spend too*

*much. (Note: Today's debt is almost \$32 trillion, and the numbers are spinning ever upward at usdebtclock.org.)*

*We must reject the idea that every time a law's broken, society is guilty rather than the lawbreaker. It is time to restore the American precept that each individual is accountable for his actions. (Note the relevance to today!)*

*Man is not free unless government is limited. ... As government expands, liberty contracts.*

*Government always finds a need for whatever money it gets.*

*Politics is supposed to be the second-oldest profession. I have come to realize that it bears a very close resemblance to the first.*

*Of the four wars in my lifetime, none came about because the U. S. was too strong.*

*A taxpayer – that's someone who works for the federal government but doesn't have to take the civil service exam.*

*Protecting the rights of the least individual among us is basically the only excuse the government has for even existing.*

*Socialists ignore the side of man that is the spirit. They can provide you shelter, fill your belly ... treat you when you're ill, all the things guaranteed to a prisoner or a slave. They don't understand that we also dream. If we lose freedom here, there is no place to escape to. This is the last stand on earth.*

*Socialism only works in two places: Heaven where they don't need it and hell where they already have it.*

*Government programs, once launched, never disappear. Actually a government bureau is the nearest thing to eternal life we'll ever see on earth!*

*Government's view of the economy could be ... If it moves, tax it. If it keeps moving, regulate it. And if it stops moving, subsidize it.*

*The most terrifying words in the English language are: "I'm from the government and I'm here to help."*

An important election is coming up. Will any candidate match the stature and wisdom of Reagan or Washington? We can hope. And we can do our research and vote wisely.

## THE MADERA COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION IS SEEKING APPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTEER COMMITTEE APPOINTMENT

If you are interested in helping to improve public transit services within the county or know someone who would, please contact the Madera County Transportation Commission (MCTC) office. Those wishing to apply for a vacant volunteer position on the Social Services Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC) can contact MCTC staff or access an application on the SSTAC Application webpage: <https://www.maderactc.org/bc-transportation>

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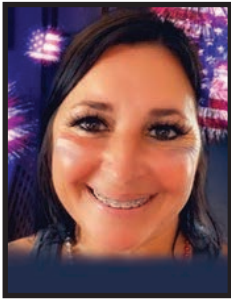
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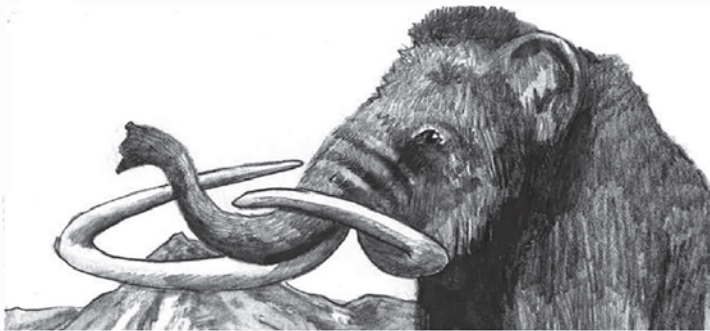


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The Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce would love to see you at our next meeting, always the second Wednesday of the month. Join us on June 14 at 6:30 p.m. at 37167 Ave. 12, Suite 5C. Come give your input on the future of the Ranchos.

*For more information,  
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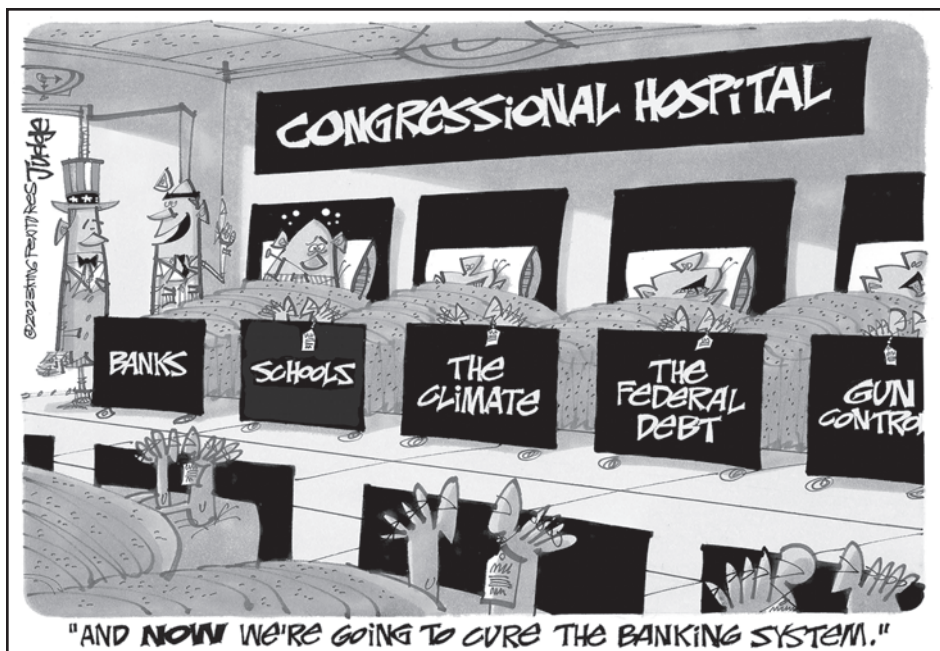
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## Guest Editorial

### More "Basement Joe"

By Rich Lowry

Joe Biden is going to run for re-election. One question this raises: How is anyone going to tell?

The basement presidency is about to embark on another basement campaign.

Biden's political genius turns out to be not provoking strong negative emotions because no one particularly thinks of him as being in charge or as having anything interesting to say.

President Biden and the people around him are, in effect, conducting a large-scale, on-going political science experiment: Is it possible to run a

*To paraphrase Woody Allen, 90 percent of getting elected for Joe Biden is just showing up.*

left-wing government -- with tactics often frankly at odds with our constitutional system -- and avoid a massive backlash by having a president at the top who appears ineffectual and out of touch?

If Bernie Sanders, the ill-kempt, self-avowed socialist, or Elizabeth Warren, the off-putting, dyed-in-the-wool progressive former academic, presided over exactly the same administration with exactly the same policies, they'd have ig-

nited a political firestorm by now.

The cry from the center-right and independents would be, "To the barricades!" The cry provoked by Joe Biden is more, "Meh."

By being around forever, Biden has achieved the status of a known quantity. His rhetoric is generally moderate-sounding, and he never says anything memorable. No matter how radical and lawless the acts of his administration, it's hard to associate those qualities with an elderly man who tells stories of his

bygone cooperation with Republicans and often rambles to little effect.

People should be threatened by this administration, but -- with a few ex-

ceptions such as his visually apocalyptic "Dark Brandon" speech prior to the midterms -- they don't feel threatened by Biden himself. Or they fear his incompetence more than anything else.

Biden's age is an asset in taking the edge off his left-wing governance, yet the effects of it are obvious for everyone to see. At 80, he makes the elder statesmen of yore seem youthful by comparison. Golda Meir became prime minister of Israel at 70. Ronald Reagan was elected president at 69. The long-serving French legend Charles de Gaulle retired permanently at 79.

If the reaction to Joe Biden isn't a vociferous rejection, it is still an emphatic, "No, thanks." According to the new NBC News poll, more than half of Democrats and 70% Americans don't want him to run for reelection. His age, of course, is the leading reason; it doesn't take a gerontologist to realize that an 80-year-old man and the most demanding job on the planet aren't a natural match.

The White House clearly understands this as well. President Biden is carefully stage managed, and sometimes awkwardly reminded of his cues by people with him at events. His interactions with the press are limited, and this isn't a

Please see EDITORIAL on P. 13

**THE RAY GUN**  
 SHOOTING STRAIGHT TO THE HEART

"POLITICS IS SUPPOSED TO BE THE SECOND-OLDEST PROFESSION. I HAVE COME TO REALIZE THAT IT BEARS A VERY CLOSE RESEMBLANCE TO THE FIRST."

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

# Look at the Animals!

**GENERATION WHY**  
by **eryn b. nyre**



It's not a surprise to me that people in general, especially in public spaces, have trouble reading notices and following directions. The push or pull signs on doors are enough evidence of that phenomenon. Tommy Lee said it best in the classic movie Men in Black, "People are dumb." He said more things in this line, but this really zeroes in on the main point.

I went to the zoo a few weeks back and let me tell you, the amount of people who were completely unwilling to read notices and follow rules would be astounding if I hadn't already spent enough time in public to know people rarely pay attention to rules. It's interesting how quickly they become self-righteous and appalled when there are consequences to not following the rules they didn't bother to learn. The animals in cages made me sad. The people getting yelled at and thrown out made me happy. Overall, it was a good day.

Like a lot of zoos, this one has peacocks, peahens, ducks and geese waddling around. There are signs everywhere ... and I mean everywhere, telling people not to feed them, not to touch them, and don't let your kids chase and torment the animals. That was nearly a direct quote. I lost count of how many kids I saw running down some bird, the parents just sitting on a bench watching it happen and enjoying the brief respite courtesy of the winged babysitter. One family enjoyed it less when an employee scolded the kids. The mama bear tried to rescue her rambunctious little cub by slinging obscenities at the employee. Zoo security was called and escorted her, her wailing kids and her obviously humiliated husband to the exit. I hadn't been in the park 20 minutes and it was already worth the entrance fee.


Not much later I was gazing in awe at the colony of penguins in their cold, enclosed habitat, while simultaneously enduring the pungent aroma of what I presume was day-old fish. Several kids and more than a couple of adults kept banging and tapping on the glass. This was despite a sign warning us not to do so as it disturbs the pen-

guins. The zookeeper had to remind people over and over again to stop and at one point threatened to close the exhibit for the rest of the day if the behavior continued. I can't stress enough. The signs warning us all against this disruptive behavior were all over the exhibit, at eye level, and in multiple languages.

My favorite moment of the day, however, was when a grown man stood in front of the gorilla habitat and read, out loud for all of us to hear, what hand gestures and facial expressions we must avoid because primates, namely this extremely large and powerful gorilla, find aggressive. Then he laughed and proceeded to demonstrate them. He bared his teeth, beat his chest and made weird hollering noises that seemed less primate and more jack ass. A few of us, myself included, yelled at him to stop. Predictably, the gorilla charged through the enclosure and threw some mud at him. It didn't hit him. I was disappointed and hoped the great ape would try again. I'm not saying I wanted the gorilla to eat him or play basketball with his head or anything, but it would have been funny if the mud had hit him in the face. It would have been funnier if it had been poop.

One girl ran to the chimpanzee enclosure and got the zookeeper. Security was once again called and proceeded to escort him out. The guy argued that he shouldn't be kicked out because he was only joking and the monkey shouldn't have taken him seriously. There's a lot to unpack there; I'll save that for another time.

All in all, it was a pretty interesting trip to the zoo. You learn a lot observing animals; you even learn from observing those in the cages.



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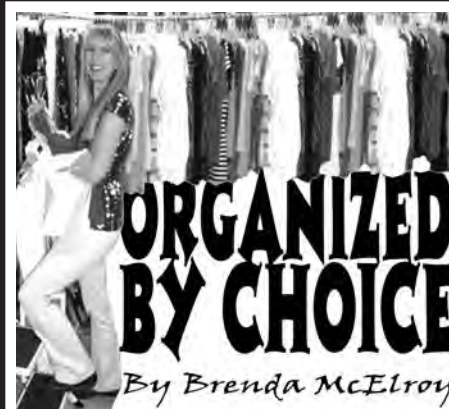
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### Handling “Sneaky” Clutter

I’m at the age when it helps having magnification while applying makeup. The other day I noticed I was squatting ever so slightly to align my face with my pull-out adjustable mirror. See the problem? I was adjusting instead of having my adjustable mirror do the work.

Sometimes we do that with our clutter. We step over or reach around our clutter instead of adjusting it. We put something down instead of away because

there’s no space for it.

I could have altered my posture instead of my mirror for quite some time before feeling it. Eventually, my back or neck would have told me something was amiss. Clutter and its effects don’t happen overnight. It tends to be sneaky and goes unnoticed for a while.

If you’re feeling stressed, frustrated, anxious, or distracted, there could be a plethora of causes. Don’t discount sneaky clutter, or the fact that de-cluttering will free your mind to focus on other contributing issues.

Perfection is never the goal. Creating an environment that allows you to move freely, tidy-up easily and have more peace and productivity is. Here are four ways to take control of sneaky clutter rather than adjusting to it. Commit four weeks to this process and enjoy the benefits.

**Find the floor.** Every day pick up and put away one thing that landed on the floor but doesn’t belong there. It may be clothing, surplus paper products, a suitcase waiting to be unpacked, a basket of clean laundry, etc. Start with the least cluttered floor area. Stick with that space each day until completed. Seeing the clear floor is motivation for the next area. Take Sundays off.

**Count off counters.** Identify four cluttered countertops or flat surfaces — kitchen, bathroom(s), guest bed, laundry, desk, entry table, dining table, etc. Choose one to work on each week. Set your timer for ten minutes per weekday or 50 minutes on Saturday and de-clutter away.

**Seize more space.** You may feel like you don’t have room to spare, but there’s probably a cabinet or closet with some low hanging fruit — and by fruit, I mean space.

During your four-week attack on sneaky clutter, survey your cabinets and closets looking for hidden space. It might currently be storing empty electronics boxes you saved from

Please see **ORGANIZE** on P. 9

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Senior Report

# “Art Groove” Calling Seniors

By Melanie Williams

We are “busting” at the seams with new activities being added each month at the Ranchos/Hills Senior Center.

The Monthly Sale is on Saturday, June 3 from 8 a.m. to noon. Thank you to all the wonderful community donors who keep our Treasure House well-stocked with new and slightly used items.

Dot Husted has donated a quilt to the Senior Center and Quilt Fundraiser tickets are available at the Monthly Sale. The beautifully hand-crafted quilt is on display in the main building and everyone is welcome to stop by the Ranchos/Hills Senior Center at 37330 Berkshire Dr. any weekday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. to take a look.

On June 3, some senior members are going to Coarsegold for the 18th Annual Music in the Meadow, a fundraiser for the Coarsegold Historic Museum. Silent auction items include an autographed guitar by Alice Cooper and VIP Caboose Tickets from the Sugar Pine Railroad. The Executive Rockers will perform tunes from the 60s through the 80s and a little bit of country. Food and refreshments by the Blue Heron Restaurant will be available. Entry is \$10 and you'll need to bring a comfy chair to enjoy the music.

There are new activities at the Art Groove Gallery in River Park. Bingo is in full swing on the second Wednesday of each month from 4 to 6 p.m. If you like playing Bingo, come and join our senior group on June 14.

Local jewelry artisans are hosting a jewelry making class on every fourth Wednesday from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. All supplies are provided. If you are interested in the class on June 28, please sign up at the Senior Center.

We are still on the schedule every first Wednesday for our Paint Party. Next will be on June 7 from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. A big thank you to Melanie Glass, director of the Art Groove Gallery at River Park for providing all of these exciting events.

We are celebrating Father's Day with a potluck on June 19 at 11 a.m. at the Senior Center. Please bring a dish to share with eight to 10 servings and your own paper plates and plasticware. We will be meeting right after the morning exercise class, so be prepared to stay and enjoy some good food and company.

The Birthday and Anniversary Luncheon is Saturday, June 17 at 11:30 a.m. Everyone is looking forward to meeting at Yosemite Falls Cafe at 5123 N. Blackstone Ave. in Fresno. Please call the Senior Center at 559-645-4864 to sign up for the luncheon.

The Ranchos/Hills Senior Center is still providing community service opportunities for any high school students who need additional hours for graduation requirements. If you would like to work in the Scout Garden or around the flower beds on the Senior Center property, please call and make arrangements with our volunteer master gardeners to schedule work times. Call the Senior Center at 559-645-4864 and leave a message for Diane Maxfield in the Scout Garden.

The Ranchos/Hills Senior Center is in need of a contractor who can inspect the building and property for maintenance and repairs. Please call us with any reputable referrals or suggestions for expert advice.

Happy Father's Day from the members of the Ranchos/Hill Senior Center.

Quote for June: “*Summertime is always the best of what might be.*” -- Charles Bowden









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SNITCH cont. from P. 2

The supposed aim of the hotline is the “stop the normalization of hate in our communities and ensure impacted individuals get the help they need.” To some, this type of program might sound wonderful at first glance. But there are some serious issues with this. For starters, whether one believes in the idea of “hate crimes” or not, if someone witnesses an act of violence against someone else, would it not make more sense to call law enforcement directly instead of going through some government-funded program? If something like this happens, chances are the witness or victim isn’t thinking about calling a hotline, right?

So, it seems to make more sense that this website is more about “hate incidents” involving bullying or the use of derogatory names. In essence, California’s government is encouraging its residents to report people who use disgusting rhetoric against others based on immutable characteristics. Of course, any decent person detests bigotry in all its forms.

But the notion that we should be filing reports with the government seems rather Orwellian, doesn’t it? It is the same type of behavior that other states encouraged during the COVID-19 pandemic when people were calling hotlines to snitch on their neighbors for not complying with the onerous restrictions their governments imposed.

There are several other problems with this program. For starters, the hotline system relies on individuals reporting “hate incidents” or acts of bigotry, which can be subjective and open to interpretation. This leaves room for potential misuse and false reporting, as people may exploit the system to settle personal grievances or silence

ORGANIZE cont. from P. 7

five years ago in case you needed to return them. It might have college binders and textbooks or VHS movies. Maybe there are boxes of canning jars or other supplies from a long-gone hobby.

Once you choose an area, schedule one hour to purge and recover that valuable space. This will provide places for homeless items you discover on your floor and flat surfaces.

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those with differing opinions.

The lack of clear criteria and guidelines for identifying and verifying hate incidents could lead to a chilling effect on free speech and the expression of unpopular views. Also, considering the fact that folks on the hard left view any utterance with which they disagree as bigoted makes this even more problematic.

Secondly, the program’s emphasis on bypassing law enforcement and offering civil legal options raises concerns about due process and accountability. By encouraging individuals to seek alternatives to the criminal legal system, the program could undermine the principles of fair and impartial justice. It may result in a lack of proper investigation and legal protection for both the accused and the alleged victims, potentially leading to unjust outcomes.

Lastly, the program’s broad definition of a hate incident, including actions such as name-calling and refusal of service, raises questions about the proportionality of the response. While such behaviors may be undesirable, categorizing them as hate incidents and potentially subjecting individuals to legal or social consequences could be seen as an overreach of governmental authority, especially if these incidents end up in the hands of law enforcement. This approach risks stifling open dialogue and debate, as individuals may fear retribution for expressing controversial or unpopular opinions.

This is the type of program that could easily be taken to a dark place despite its supposedly noble intentions. It could be weaponized to “crack down on speech” and intimidate people into censoring themselves. This outcome wouldn’t exactly be surprising in the People’s Republic of California, would it?

tions — recycle, shred, file and a holding place for active paperwork (bills, forms, RSVPs, etc.). During these four weeks, commit to handling incoming paper daily instead of tossing them on the nearest flat surface. It will pay off. For a tip sheet on processing paper email me at [info@organizedbychoice.com](mailto:info@organizedbychoice.com).

I would love to hear about your experience as you take control of your clutter — victories and challenges as well. See my contact info below.

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# SEE YOU SUNDAY!

# SEMUCU speaks

By Dov Adler

## 2023 Precipitation and Climate Update

This year we had abundant precipitation statewide through Jan. 31 at 18.17 inches. This is 147 percent of the average for this time period. A significant weather pattern change arrived with the winter solstice with the blocking high pressure moving south and a stronger jet stream pushing a series of warm storms into California. A series of nine atmospheric rivers impacted California with heavy precipitation and strong winds. In a three-week span from Dec. 25, 2022 to Jan. 15, 2023, 11.18 inches of precipitation fell over California, which is 46 percent of a total water year. While precipitation was statewide, the major sum was in the center between San Francisco Bay and Santa Barbara.

Statewide reservoir storage at the end of January was 97 percent of average. Snowpack at the end of January, based on the automated snow sensors, reported approximately 206 percent of average snowpack for this time of year and 129 percent of a full seasonal snowpack expected on or around April 1. This is one of the strongest starts to a snowpack in the last 40 years.

In 2014, California voters approved \$2.7 billion for dam expansions that were supposed to create 2.8-million-acre feet of additional storage capacity. Construction was due to start this year after slow-footed state representatives' reaction to the program execution. During the Jan. 9 storm alone, public works en-

gineers estimated 55,000 acre-feet of water went into the Pacific Ocean from Los Angeles (18 billion gallons).

Over 340 projects have been proposed by communities in California, while the state itself has a goal of expanding average groundwater recharge by at least 500,000 acre-feet each year.

In January of this year, state agencies opened a fast-track groundwater recharge pilot project to capture flood waters for underground storage. The data to submit an application is through the California Board of Water Resources, in which grants/applications can be submitted through the local General Services Administration.

One other option that was suggested is a permeable pavement, or a surface that allows runoff to pass through pavement and into underlying stone beds and soil. San Francisco has already started building some roads with this type of pavement. Hopefully this will be the beginning of a new era.

The public is invited and encouraged to offer ideas for projects to help our community. SEMCU convenes for only one hour on the third Monday of every month starting at 6 p.m. The next meeting is Monday, June 19.

For the foreseeable future, instead of convening our monthly Board meetings at the Pizza Factory, we will hold our board meetings via telephone conferencing. To participate in the board's conference meeting via telephone or video, call: 312-757-3121. You will get prompted to input the access code: 715657949#

For more information or suggestions, call 559-363-9095 or reach the organization at [www.semcu.org](http://www.semcu.org) or by email at [info@semcu.org](mailto:info@semcu.org).

*SEMUCU is "By the Community,  
For the Community"*

## Riverstone Carjacking, Wild Ride

A man working out of his AT&T van was carjacked at the Riverstone shopping area at Avenue 12 and Highway 41 just before 1 p.m. on Tuesday, May 9. The carjacker, later identified as 42-year-old Marcus Banksbey of Sacramento, brandished what turned out to be an airsoft pistol and a scuffle ensued, followed by Banksbey spraying the victim with pepper spray.

Banksbey then took the vehicle and drove to Fresno and Nees where he attempted to rob a Central Valley Community Bank, after he phoned in a false claim of a "man with a gun" at Bullard High as a diversion. Banksbey was ultimately captured less than five miles from the bank.

In a bizarre turn of events, background on Banksbey revealed that he served in the California Army National Guard as an information systems operator/analyst from 2000 to 2012 and as a command/unit chaplain from 2012 to 2019, attaining the rank of captain. He deployed to Jordan from November 2017 to April 2018, a National Guard spokesperson said.

The Madera County investigation remains ongoing. Anyone with information regarding this case is encouraged to contact Madera County Sheriff's Office at 675-7770. For details regarding the ongoing investigation in Fresno, please get in touch with the Fresno Police Department at 621-7000.



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EDITORIAL cont. from P. 5

media that is out to get him but is incredibly sympathetic and accommodating.

Biden broke with tradition by not holding a press conference while on his trip to Ireland. He's done 54 interviews so far in his first two

years, according to The New York Times, the fewest since Ronald Reagan. He has averaged 10 news conferences a year, whereas Calvin Coolidge -- you know, "Silent Cal" -- did about 90 annually during his first two years in office.

The standard isn't very high, though, when you are a default can-

didate. That's how Biden won against Donald Trump in 2020; it's how he avoided a midterm drubbing in 2022; and it's how he hopes to win again against Trump, should he be the nominee, in 2024.

Biden has built on the old adage, "Never interfere with an enemy when he's destroying himself." His version is basically, "Never bother going out in public when your enemy is destroying himself."

The lesson of the last couple of

years is that Biden doesn't have to be scintillating, impressive, or inspiring. Heck, he doesn't even have to be popular. He simply has to be there. To paraphrase Woody Allen, 90% of getting elected for Joe Biden is just showing up.

His campaign could be barely evident and still succeed.

*Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review.*

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*Kiwanis Korner*

# Distinguished Kiwanis Recognized

By Sally Rowden

To start out this article, we want to acknowledge the two new members that just joined our club. Rod Chaney and John Herrera were installed by our Division 5 Lieutenant Governor, Claudia Soria-Delgado. Member Marie Cameron sponsored John Herrera and Member Mona Diaz sponsored Rod Chaney. Welcome Rod and John. Great to have you both with us.

We gave out two Distinguished Service Awards within our club. One went to Mona Diaz for her tireless, joyful and consistent work supporting our club, our communities and the clubs within Kiwanis Division 5. The other service award went to Richard Wayne for his solid commitment as the advisor in supporting the Kiwanis Key Club student members of Liberty High School. Congratulations to both of you.



Member Richard Wayne, right, receives the Distinguished Service Award from Club President Ollia Ridge.

Our club volunteered to assist the Kiwanis Special Olympics in Clovis. We created a Saturday morning assembly line packing almost 200 lunches. The lunches were refrigerated overnight then transported out to Clovis on Sunday. Giving back is a huge part of being a Kiwanian.

It was exciting to hear from our own member, Richard Wayne, who just experienced the Central Valley Honor Flight. He was our guest speaker giving us insightful and detailed happenings of the honor flight experience. Richard is a Vietnam Veteran and it was rewarding for us to share in Richard's memorable Washington D.C. trip.

Three of our local events we sponsor at this time of the year are in progress. Providing lunch for our Golden Valley Unified School District staff and teachers, the John Minney Liberty High School Scholarship Awards and the Character Counts Bicycle Giveaways at our three elementary schools. All three will conclude by mid-June.

Closing thought ... as I've shared often the Kiwanis main focus is "improving the world one child and one community at a time." Kiwanis is a global organization with clubs volunteering and serving all over the world. Here in our piece of this world let's remember for our children "... the greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members." Coretta Scott King.

Kiwanis Club of the Madera Ranchos meets every second and fourth Thursday of the month at 6 p.m. at the Second Son Brew at 37167 Avenue 12, Unit 4C in the Ranchos. For more information email rowdensally2@gmail.com.

[www.RanchosKiwanis.com](http://www.RanchosKiwanis.com)

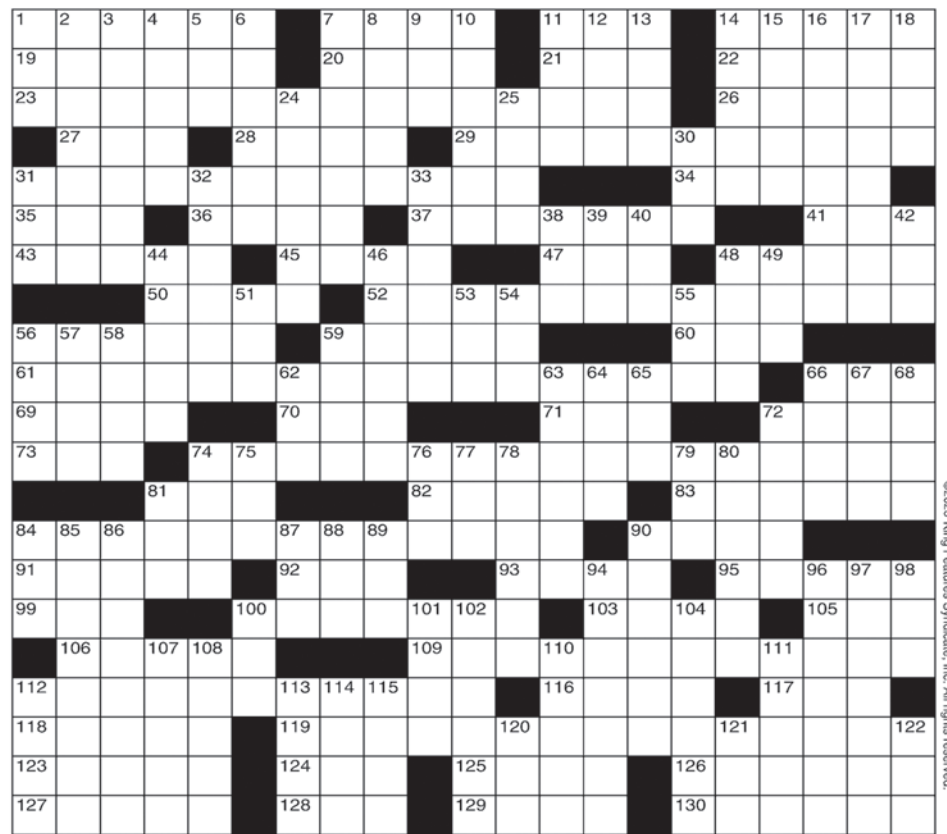


Guest speaker Richard Wayne was a recipient of the Central Valley Honor Flight for his service in Vietnam.



Also receiving the Distinguished Service Award is Mona Diaz, center, flanked by club members Marie Cameron and President Ollia Ridge.

# Super Crossword



- |   |   |  |  |                                    |                                       |
|---|---|--|--|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>ACROSS</b>                             | <b>50</b> Safe sword  | <b>93</b> Cellar, in ads                           | <b>4</b> Children's author Madeleine L'— | <b>40</b> Rock singer Nugent       | <b>80</b> Good egg rating             |
| <b>1</b> Gets married again               | <b>52</b> Question about one's relentless following           | <b>95</b> Makes accused                            | <b>5</b> Abbr. for a handyperson         | <b>42</b> Bit of work              | <b>81</b> Israeli weapon              |
| <b>7</b> Playmate for Spot                | <b>11</b> Fed. loan agency                                    | <b>100</b> Expectant father                        | <b>6</b> Refused the request             | <b>44</b> "Wow, neat!"             | <b>84</b> ABC a.m. show, for short    |
| <b>14</b> The — & the Papas               | <b>19</b> Greek Muse of astronomy                             | <b>103</b> Latin I verb                            | <b>7</b> Blast from a lighthouse         | <b>48</b> Gets mature              | <b>85</b> Police vehicle              |
| <b>20</b> Take way too much of, for short | <b>21</b> That lady   | <b>105</b> Fore and —                              | <b>8</b> Pet collar attachment           | <b>49</b> Cpl.'s boss              | <b>86</b> Reagan-era scandal          |
| <b>22</b> Scarlett of Tara                | <b>23</b> Equipping a ranch with light, horse-drawn vehicles? | <b>106</b> Way to pack fresh fish                  | <b>9</b> Homer Simpson cry               | <b>51</b> Austin-to-Houston dir.   | <b>87</b> Positive vote               |
| <b>26</b> Anatomical sacs                 | <b>27</b> Playa — Rey   | <b>109</b> Heroic American spy's petty bargaining? | <b>10</b> "Be right there"               | <b>53</b> Dir. opposite 51-Down    | <b>88</b> Auction offer               |
| <b>28</b> Qatari capital                  | <b>29</b> Brie exposed to heat?                               | <b>112</b> Whopper dropped in water?               | <b>11</b> Carpet style                   | <b>54</b> Santa — winds            | <b>89</b> Doc treating sinusitis      |
| <b>31</b> Cooing bird wearing fancy duds? | <b>34</b> Port in Iraq  | <b>116</b> — about (around)                        | <b>12</b> Big icy chunk                  | <b>55</b> Be a debtor              | <b>90</b> Ski resort in S. Vermont    |
| <b>35</b> "I'm — loss"                    | <b>36</b> Dark film style                                     | <b>117</b> British islet                           | <b>13</b> Gls' force                     | <b>56</b> Impersonated             | <b>94</b> Most ogreish                |
| <b>37</b> Forest cats                     | <b>41</b> Bar brew  | <b>118</b> City in central Florida                 | <b>14</b> Coffee flavor                  | <b>57</b> Silver-haired            | <b>96</b> Cartoon gorilla of 1960s TV |
| <b>43</b> Months before Oct.              | <b>45</b> Pre-Q queue   | <b>119</b> Dancing woman's moves?                  | <b>15</b> "Now I remember"               | <b>58</b> Increase                 | <b>97</b> Lions, 49ers or Steelers    |
| <b>47</b> Prez Lincoln                    | <b>48</b> Furrier John Jacob —                                | <b>123</b> Suppressed                              | <b>16</b> Italian sports car             | <b>59</b> Gp. patrolling shores    | <b>98</b> Canonized Fr. woman         |
|   |   | <b>124</b> Lyric poem                              | <b>17</b> Cultural exhibition hall       | <b>62</b> Division: Abbr.          | <b>100</b> Cotillion gal              |
|   |   | <b>125</b> Discontinues                            | <b>18</b> Encl. with a manuscript        | <b>63</b> Errand runners           | <b>101</b> "That's — haven't heard!"  |
|   |   | <b>126</b> Money, informally                       | <b>24</b> "Can't, I'm already late"      | <b>64</b> Top Olympic medal        | <b>102</b> — & Noble                  |
|   |   | <b>127</b> Filled cookies                          | <b>25</b> Diminish                       | <b>65</b> Mauna —                  | <b>104</b> Scampi food                |
|   |   | <b>128</b> Abel, to Eve                            | <b>30</b> "MacGyver" network             | <b>66</b> Info to input            | <b>107</b> Inuit dwelling             |
|   |   | <b>129</b> Sing like Ella                          | <b>31</b> Faux — (slip)                  | <b>67</b> Chopped down             | <b>108</b> Greenish-blue colors       |
|   |   | <b>130</b> Neighbor of Colombia                    | <b>32</b> Without assurance of payment   | <b>68</b> Knights, e.g.            | <b>110</b> Accord maker               |
|   |   |  | <b>33</b> Disappear as if by magic       | <b>72</b> Eta-iota link            | <b>111</b> Be choked by               |
|   |   |  | <b>38</b> On the — (hiding out)          | <b>74</b> Look intently            | <b>112</b> Merely OK                  |
|   |   |  | <b>39</b> Kobe sash                      | <b>75</b> Wholly                   | <b>113</b> Sci-fi vehicles            |
|   |   |  |  | <b>76</b> Heart chart, in brief    | <b>114</b> Overhaul                   |
|   |   |  |  | <b>77</b> — -AFTRA (showbiz union) | <b>115</b> Fed. agents                |
|   |   |  |  | <b>78</b> Due to wagering          | <b>120</b> U.S. "Ltd."                |
|   |   |  |  | <b>79</b> Sport — (off-roader)     | <b>121</b> — long way                 |
|   |   |  |  |                                    | <b>122</b> — Na Na                    |


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“And I thought YOU were the surgeon.”

# Salome's Stars

**ARIES** (March 21 to April 19) That sometimes contrarian Arian streak emerges and could affect an important decision. Try to keep your mind open to the possibilities, even if they currently seem remote.

**TAURUS** (April 20 to May 20) It could be a long wait before you get an answer to a question involving financial matters. Meanwhile, check on other interesting possibilities.

**GEMINI** (May 21 to June 20) A misunderstanding shouldn't keep you from continuing to work. Pursue a reconciliation with someone who really cares. Talk it out before you consider walking out.

**CANCER** (June 21 to July 22) Exercise some discipline -- don't keep changing your mind. An upcoming decision requires that you stay focused on the direction you need to follow.

**LEO** (July 23 to August 22) Although family matters take up much of your time these days, you still need to deal with important workplace issues. Try to balance both obligations wisely.

**VIRGO** (August 23 to September 22) Your on-the-job problems appear close to being resolved. Now, make time to repair those personal relationships that you might have ignored for too long.

**LIBRA** (September 23 to October 22) Someone might suddenly balk at fulfilling an important agreement. There could be a hidden reason that you'll need to uncover before you take this to arbitration.

**SCORPIO** (October 23 to November 21) A friend seeks to confide a secret, knowing it will be safe with you. But, given your friend's history, you might not want to know what you'll be told.

**SAGITTARIUS** (November 22 to December 21) Your new "self-improvement" course will continue to hit bumps in the road until you start shedding those unnecessary loads you've toted for too long.

**CAPRICORN** (December 22 to January 19) A decision to move to a new home needs to be delayed until you have accurate reports about its condition. Rely on facts, not assurances.

**AQUARIUS** (January 20 to February 18) Congratulations! Your good work is beginning to pay off. Reward yourself. Take some much-needed rest and recreation time with loved ones.

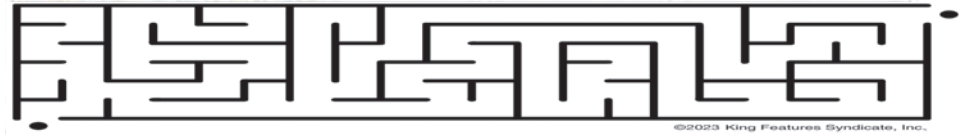
**PISCES** (February 19 to March 20) Fishing for compliments isn't always wise. Build your self-esteem on your own worthy achievements, and don't rely on others to tell your value.

## Born this Week

*People who meet you want to get to know you better, but you tend to be difficult to please when it comes to forming friendships.*

# FUN PAGES

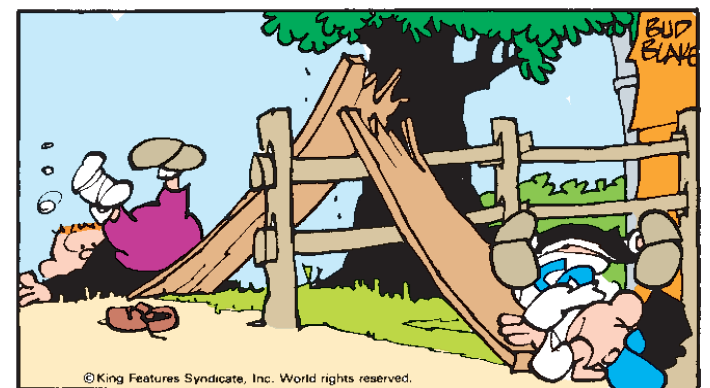
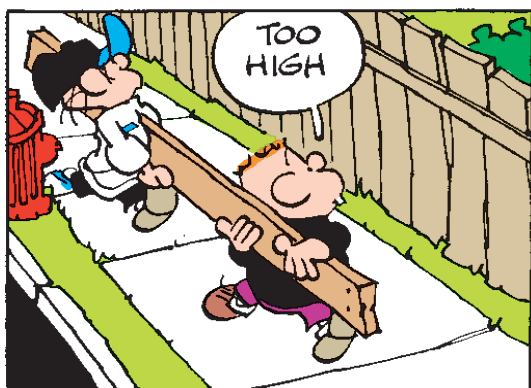
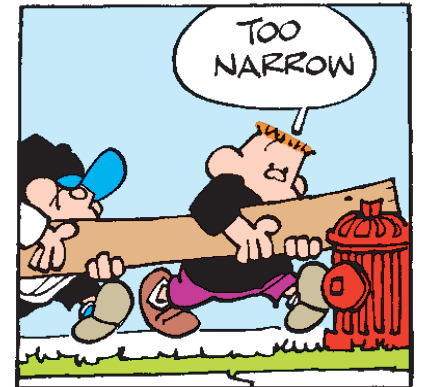
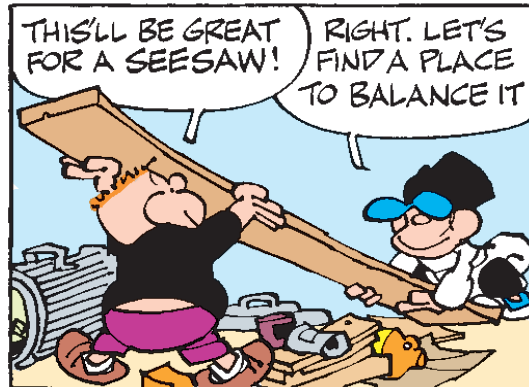
Kids' Maze



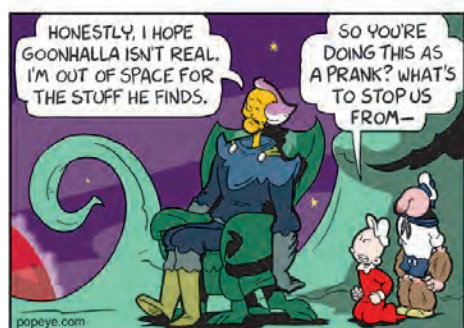
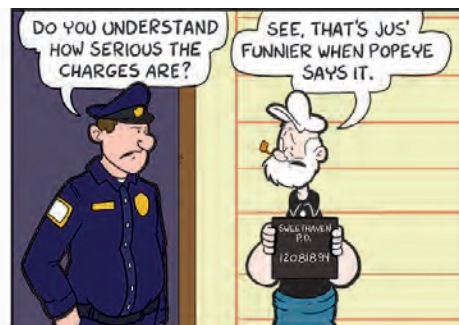
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## TIGER

by BUD BLAKE



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## TRIVIA TEST

By Fifi Rodriguez

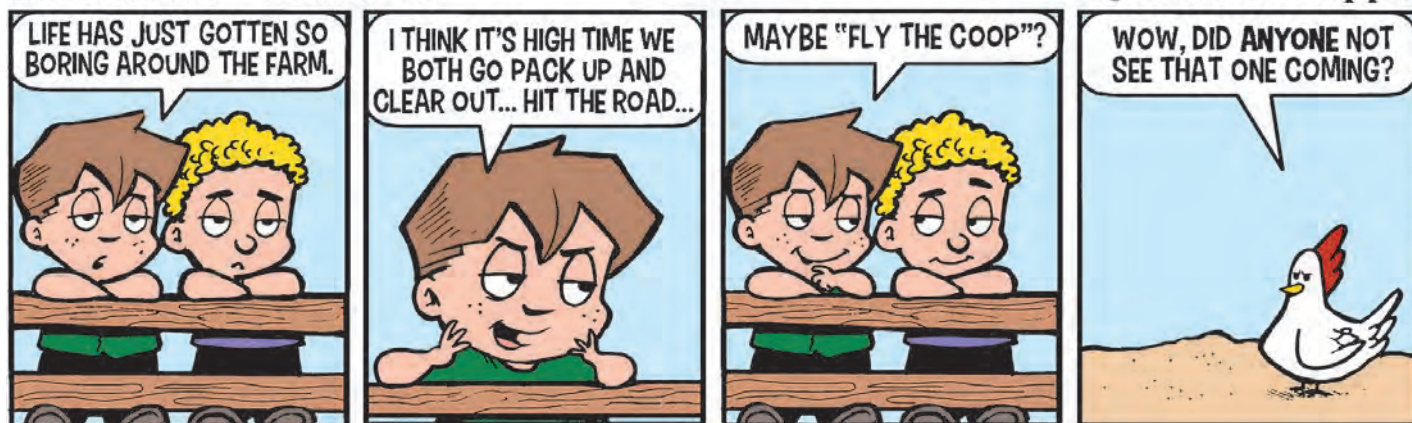
- GEOGRAPHY:** How many U.S. states border Canada?
- THEATER:** The musical "My Fair Lady" is based on which play?
- SCIENCE:** Who was the first person to win Nobel prizes in two different sciences?
- MOVIES:** Which 1997 movie featured a character named Jack Dawson?
- TELEVISION:** What is the name of Ross's pet monkey in "Friends"?
- LANGUAGE:** How many languages exist worldwide?
- FOOD & DRINK:** Which country produces Manchego cheese?
- GENERAL KNOWLEDGE:** How many track and field events are in a decathlon?
- U.S. PRESIDENTS:** Which president had the most children?
- MUSIC:** What is the title of Britney Spears' first album?

- 13.
2. "Pygmalion," by George Bernard Shaw.
3. Marie Curie, physics and chemistry.
4. "Titanic."
5. Marcel.
6. More than 7,000.
7. Spain.
8. 10.
9. John Tyler, who fathered 15 children.
10. "... Baby One More Time."

Click on "Local News" at

# Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps



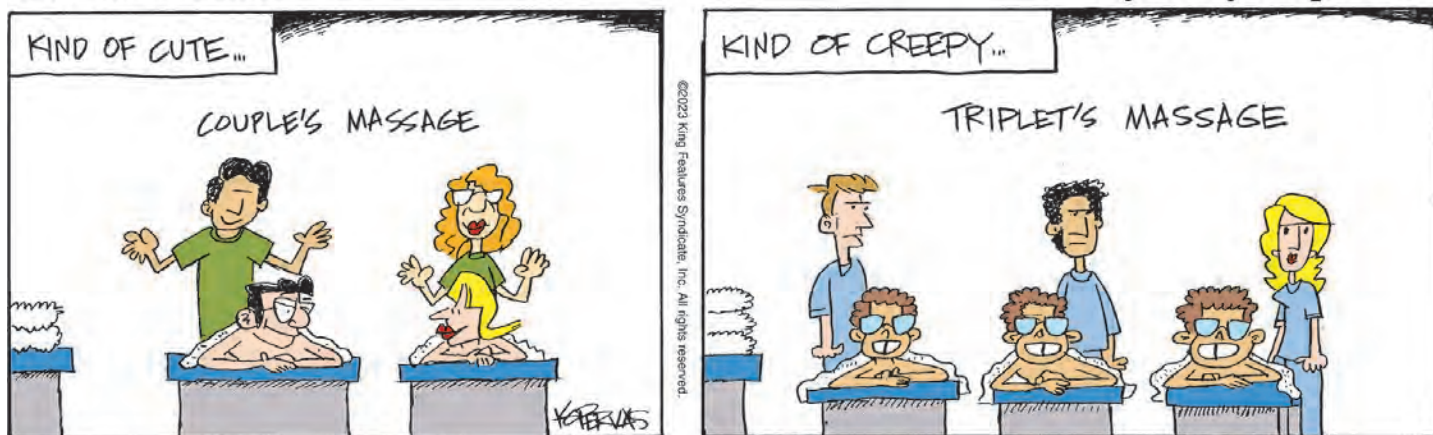
# Intelligent Life

by David Reddick



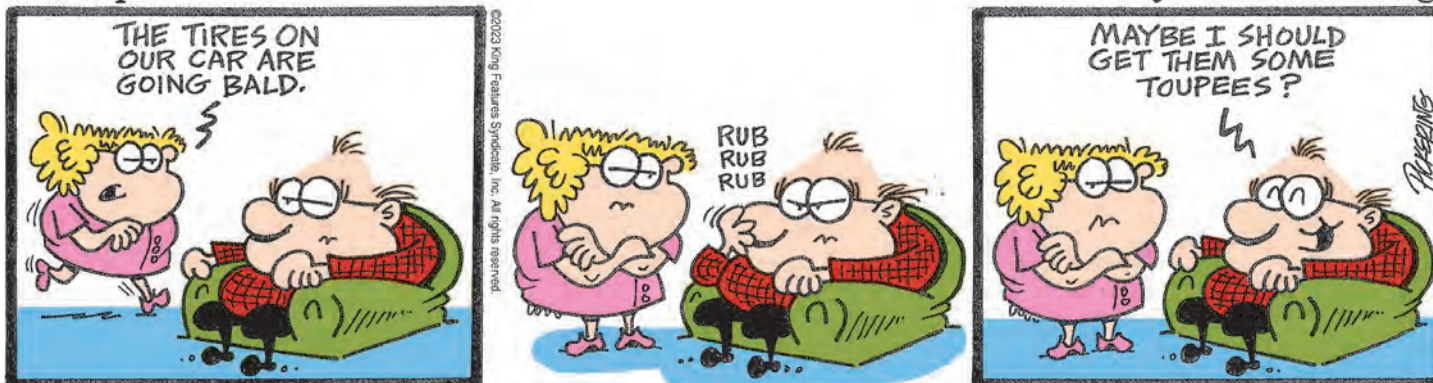
# Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas



# The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



# CryptoQuote

AXYDLBAAXR  
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, **A** is used for the three L's, **X** for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each week the code letters are different.

LPW'M KHM MOH EHTN PE  
KPIAWU SH UNHTMHN MOTW  
MOH HYRAMHGHWM PE VAWWAWU.  
- NPSHNM ZAQPITZA

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# MAGIC MAZE ● COMMON FRENCH WORDS

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

Find the listed words in the diagram. They run in all directions forward, backward, up, down and diagonally  
Unlisted clue hint: GOOD MORNING

- Amour      Femme      Mademoiselle      Oui
- Au revoir      Fille      Merci beaucoup      Raison
- Bonsoir      Homme      Monde      Temps
- Excusez-moi      Madame      Non

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# SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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

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# FUN PAGES

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**Until further notice, the regular SEMCU meetings will take place via teleconference.**

**Our next meeting is Monday, June 19 at 6 p.m.**

**The teleconference number is 312-757-3121 and the Access Code is 715-657-949.**

**Please let us know if you have any questions.**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

**559-363-9095 • [www.semcu.org](http://www.semcu.org) • [info@semcu.org](mailto:info@semcu.org)**