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CELEBRATING
19 YEARS
IN THE RANCHOS

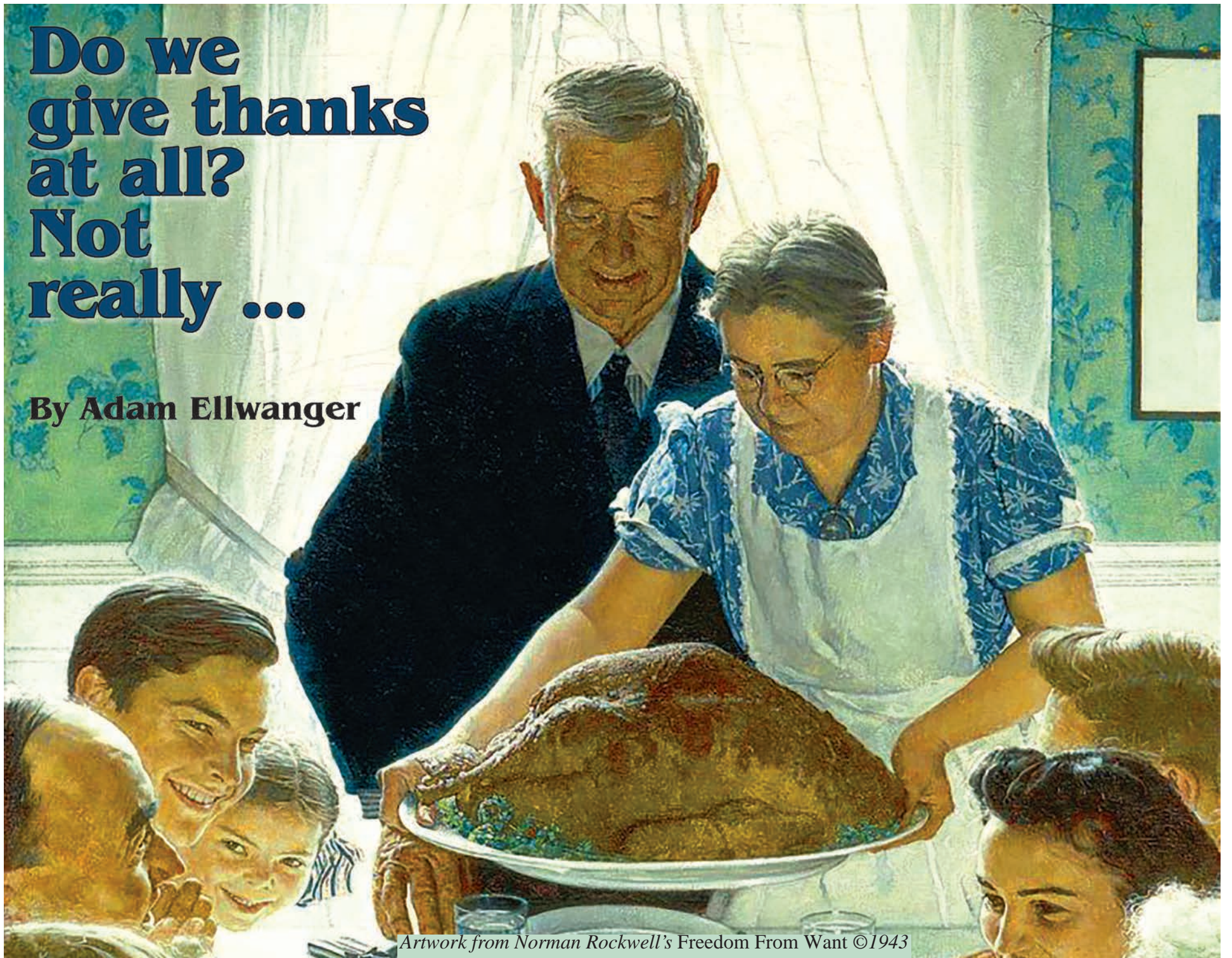
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50¢

**Do we
give thanks
at all?
Not
really ...**

By Adam Ellwanger



Artwork from Norman Rockwell's Freedom From Want ©1943

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Very soon, Americans will be on holiday for a long weekend. Thanksgiving will be an occasion for gathering with friends and family, eating an extraordinary amount of food, drinking while watching football, and trying to avoid conversations about Kyle Rittenhouse, Antifa, the midterm elections, gender “reassignment surgery,” Biden’s cognitive decline, Fetterman’s cognitive impairment, Paul Pelosi’s story, January 6, critical race theory, vaccination status, the history of relations between American settlers and indigenous peoples, Donald Trump, Elon Musk, Hunter Biden’s laptop, the media’s burial of Hunter Biden’s laptop, the price of the holiday meal, groomers, pronouns, Kanye West, cryptocurrency and whatever a “supply chain” is.

Some will call it an early evening on Thursday because the true holiday dawns in the morning, on “Black Friday,” when the nation’s gluttony is redirected from cuisine to the conspicuous purchase of electronics and other Chinese-manufactured garbage that will be unceremoniously unwrapped on the morning of our next secularized, ritualistic celebration of material consumption in late December.

Sure, there might be some spirituality left in the observance of Thanksgiving in some homes. Someone might say a brief grace before the meal, which will raise the level of discomfort by highlighting the divide between the portion of the family that still holds religious beliefs and the segment that has traded faith in God for the worship of the new deities: reason, secularism, empiricism, tolerance and the Sanctity of Our Democracy. Maybe some aging aunt will force everyone to go through the antiquated process of naming “what we’re thankful for” this year. The kids will roll their eyes, but everyone will finally go through the motions: the quick sale of

the house, an acceptance to grad school, a new job, PlayStation 5, our family.

If this sounds cynical, that’s because it is. The older I get the more I realize the great extent to which liberal secular society has hollowed out all the meaning from the annual celebrations that, in a

healthy culture, served as a collective re-dedication to the shared values that formed the basis of who we were as a people: faith, family, freedom, etc. But as leftism has displaced the Christian faith that once defined the American character, we have slowly grown embarrassed of our holidays.

Columbus Day is well on its way to fully becoming “Indigenous People’s Day” — one more opportunity for Americans to flagellate themselves for the brutality that attended the founding of our nation. The Fourth of July hangs on, but it is on thin ice: the woke read on Independence Day is that it is a jingoistic celebration of toxic white masculinity, which formed the heart of the American Revolution and remains the driving force for American imperialism and neo-colonialism today. For some, Thanksgiving has become a memorialization of our shame, as the Thanksgiving story only brings to mind the near annihilation of the Indians, who were sacrificed for Manifest Destiny and the acquisitive motives that fueled it.

Sadly, the moment when Aunt Mary asks everyone to think of what they’re thankful for isn’t a brief return to the true spirit of Thanksgiving; in fact, it is the mark of the triumph of secular liberalism in remaking the holiday. The holiday isn’t called “Thankstinking.” The name of the celebration is *Thanksgiving*. This implies that the focus of the day is a particular action: a giving. A giving of what though? Our thanks. But to whom? This question hints at what has been erased from the holiday.

Simply thinking and naming the things for which one is thankful isn’t a giving of thanks. First of all, the materialist overtones of this task are unmistakable. The things that people name are

Please see **THANKS** on P. 14

Decathletes Lectured in Madera

More than 375 Academic Decathletes from throughout California joined Madera County’s high school competitors in Madera on Oct. 26 for the 17th Annual Academic Decathlon Lecture Day. Valley experts lectured on six subject areas pertaining to this year’s Decathlon topic, “Technology and Humanity.”

“Lecture Day gives students the opportunity to interact with students from other schools across the state and come together to build their own team,” said Dr. Cecilia Massetti, Madera County Superintendent of Schools. “Students are enjoying this year’s theme, learning about a current and timely topic that impacts their daily lives certainly grabs their attention. There is so much to learn, and the journey is just getting started.”

Decathletes were allowed to attend four of six sessions throughout the day. Sessions included: Art and Technology, presented by Susana Sosa, Fresno City College professor; Literature, *The Lathe of Heaven*, presented by Tiffany Remmer, Madera Community College professor; Music in Sci-Fi Films, presented by Dr. Harmony Murphy, Madera Community College professor; The History of Computers, presented by Dennis Lingo, Madera County Superintendent of Schools; Math, presented by Kirk Delmas, Director, Curriculum and Instruction, Madera County Superintendent of Schools; and Speech, presented by Dr. Brad Millar, Madera Community College

professor.

“This is the first year math was incorporated into the lectures. Students were very responsive to have these resources added for their Decathlete study groups,” said Massetti.

The lectures were held from 10 a.m. to 2:40 p.m. at Movies Madera. Each speaker lectured in a theater and students moved about the different theaters. Each expert lectured for at least two 50-minute sessions.

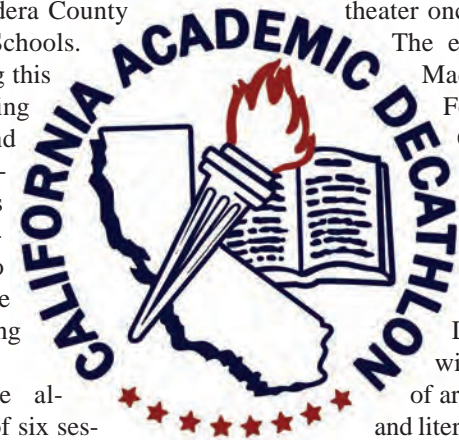
Theater owner Bob Gran donated the theater once again for the event.

The event is sponsored by Madera County Schools Foundation and Madera County Superintendent of Schools.

Each session was geared toward the topics and areas of study for the 2024 Academic Decathlon. Decathletes will be tested in the areas of art, economics, language and literature, math, music, science, and social science. They will also write an essay, deliver a speech and participate in an interview.

This year Madera County will have seven schools participate: Liberty High School, Chawanakee Academy, Chowchilla Union High School, Glacier High School Charter, Madera High School, Madera South High School and Matilda Torres High School. The competition will be held on Saturday, Feb. 3, 2024.

For more information about the Academic Decathlon and ways to get involved, contact Kristi Winter, events coordinator for Madera County Superintendent of Schools, at 559-662-3873.



Community Memory Tree Service

Many suffer through the holidays with the pain of having lost a loved one. The Christmas music, holiday parties and festive decorations trigger reminders of the loss.

You’re invited to participate in a Community Memory Tree Service

This is a family-friendly time to remember a loved one who has passed away and is dearly missed this holiday season. You’re welcome to bring an ornament to place on the Memory Tree in honor of your loved one.

The service is Dec. 10 at 6:30 p.m. at Flipside Church, located at 37193 Ave. 12, Room 6, in Maywood Center.

For more information contact Brenda McElroy at 559-871-3314.



Click on “Local News” at

\$26K Extra to Live in California

The cost of living in California imposes an extra \$26,479 each year on a typical middle-class family, according to a survey conducted by Center Square Staff at www.JustTheNews.com. and reported on by the Transparency Founda-

tion. “Our methodology calculates that a typical middle-class family of three earning \$130,000 a year faces a “Cost of California” penalty of \$26,478.72 versus if they simply paid the national average of cost in each category,” wrote the Transparency Founda-

tion in their report. The study compared costs in major household budget categories between national and California averages, such as housing, taxes and transportation. In California, renters pay 47 percent more than the national average, while homeowners pay 32 percent more, healthcare services cost 42 percent more, and state and local taxes are 14 percent higher, among others.

There were only two categories that Californians experienced any savings over the national average. There was a 3 percent savings in health insurance, which is subsidized by higher taxes paid to the state government, and homeowner’s insurance,

which is 68 percent cheaper in California because of government-run rate change limits that are driving insurers out of the state as claims exceed insurance premiums.

Some California legislators view the report as an opportunity to highlight the need to reduce regulations and make other efforts to make the cost of doing business — and living — lower in California.

“With irresponsible policies and shameless tax increases, the majority party has made this state a very difficult place to raise a family or pursue your dreams,” said State Sen. Roger Niello, R-Fair Oaks, to The Center Square. “A

very important observation of this report is that politicians point blame at others when they are really the ones to blame. Better policy and budget decisions that put Californians first need to be implemented soon before Californians are priced out of this state.”

A recent poll from the Public Policy Institute of California found 71 percent of Californians believe their children will be financially worse off than they are, suggesting many believe California’s economic prospects may be fading off into the sunset.



Senior Lunch Program

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Pot Use, Heart Failure Connected

Daily marijuana use is associated with incident heart failure according to two studies presented at the American Heart Association Scientific Sessions 2023, held from Nov. 11 to 13 in Philadelphia.

Yakubu Bene-Alhasan, M.D., M.P.H., from Medstar Health in Baltimore, and colleagues used data from the National Institutes of Health All of Us Research Program to examine the association between the frequency of marijuana use and new-onset heart failure. Their primary take-away from the research was that as more people across the U.S. use marijuana for medical and recreational reasons, the two new studies suggest its regular intake may damage heart and brain health. Daily use of marijuana raised the risk of developing heart failure by about one-third, even after considering other factors, compared to people who reported never using marijuana.

In a second study, older people with any combination of Type 2 diabetes, high

blood pressure and high cholesterol who used marijuana, significantly increased their risk for a major acute heart or brain event while hospitalized, compared to those who reported not using marijuana.

“Since 2015, cannabis use in the U.S. has almost doubled, and it is increasing in older adults, therefore, understanding the potential increased cardiovascular risk from cannabis use is important,” said lead study author Avilash Mondal, M.D., a resident physician at Nazareth Hospital in Philadelphia. “What is unique about our study is that patients who were using tobacco were excluded because cannabis and tobacco are sometimes used together, therefore, we were able to specifically examine cannabis use and cardiovascular outcomes.”

“The main public message is to be more aware of the increased risks and open the lines of communication so that cannabis use is acknowledged and considered,” Mondal said in a statement.

Letters

Dear Editor:

As I reflect on my childhood, I realize we were ahead of our time. We were doing all the right things for the environment. We used chalk in the classrooms and pencils. No calculators or computers, so there was no waste to throw away. When chalk was gone, so was the waste. Same with the pencils. No dry erase markers, mechanical pencils, calculators or computers to recycle. We didn't have all the waste from breakfast and lunch like now. We just dumped the leftover food into the can that was then dumped and hauled to the landfill where it could biodegrade. No, my friend, in my opinion we have not done ourselves or the children any favors.

No stripping the earth for rare minerals to make chips or massive batteries, windmills or solar panels. All have an end date that are going to have to be dealt with. Plastic bags instead of paper. How is that better? Paper biodegrades. New chemicals to add to fuel for supposedly cleaner-running vehicles. Ever been around a truck that is regenerating? What is being pumped into the air then? Now many scream, "battery powered!" What does it take to make a battery or recycle one?

We now pump massive amounts of chemicals in our water supply to make is supposedly safe to drink. What about all the chemicals in our food? We spray pesticides on our food in record numbers in the fields. Mechanical harvesting. Ever see what is pumped into the air from harvesting almonds? Are any of the chemicals used on them thrown back into the air when they harvest?

I used to spend countless hours in the Fresno River playing in the clean sand and hunting tadpoles. Now it's a filthy mess where the homeless have taken over parts. Would I ever allow my child to do that now? No, I would not. Too risky with the filth, mentally ill and chance of needles.

As I reflect back, I'm so glad I grew up then, but at the same time I'm sad my children and their children will not. They will not know the TV going off at midnight to the national anthem or having only three to four channels, or having to get up to change the channel. Most are encouraged to use computers for books, have electric bikes, and their board games all require batteries and chips.

We get lectured by those who claim to be advocates for change as they fly around on private jets putting out more carbon in one trip than 90 percent of us do in a year. They throw huge parties to fundraise and use up more resources than we do in months. They tell us they have no money for our homeless veterans and seniors, yet always threaten to cut SSI for our seniors – but always manage to find billions for wars, other

countries and their pet projects. Who are they to lecture us on wanting school choice as they send their children to private schools? Or want to take away the right for us to defend our family and homes as they have private security and call to defund the police, pushing for open borders and no bail?

We have failed ourselves and our children. Yes, in my opinion we do need to reset. Back to simple times. Where the schools just teach the basics and keep their private lives and thoughts private. Where they encourage students to talk to a parent or family member. Where giving a hand up is the norm, not a handout. Let's get back to what is really good for the earth, water and soil. Not another government grant that puts millions into the bureaucrat's friends and family plan. Where another agency is formed to help solve the problem, but just causes another. Is it really about helping? Or just another money laundering ploy?

So yes, I'm that person. One who thinks in my opinion "Bidenomics" is a failure and open borders are dangerous. Newsom is running for the presidency in 24, but his close ties to China will hurt – not help – California. The policies put in place here the last several decades have been a disaster, not only for our safety, but for our environment. Bill Gates is not a scientist or an expert on vaccines. Al Gore is not a scientist or an expert on climate. And Fauci lied, and millions died. Who believes politicians have become more interested in what they can do to line their pockets and protect the wealth for themselves and their children?

From the local level up, I do not wish to give my future generations what I did not have, but what I did have. A safer childhood with clean water, healthier food, less disease, clean uncontaminated soil to play in and wisdom from our parents and grandparents. Before you fill out that next ballot, do your research and vote wisely, America. For all our children's futures.

May God bless us all.

Pamela Francher and Lee Ohannesian
Madera Ranchos

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Guest Editorial

It's Not Israel Protesters Hate

By Rich Lowry

The cataract of anti-Israel sentiment on college campuses has been shocking, but it shouldn't be surprising. It is the poisoned fruit of teaching a generation of college students to despise their own civilization.

Jesse Jackson famously led a chant at Stanford University in 1987, "Hey, hey, ho, ho, Western Civ has got to go." He was talking about the college course, but he might as well have been talking about the thing itself.

Jackson and his allies had extraordinary success in extinguishing the teaching of Western Civ. Not only have we largely stopped transmitting the story of our own civilization, we have substituted an alternative narrative that the West is reducible to racism, imperialism and colonialism.

It is in this context that the current outburst of anti-Zionism has to be understood. Yes, it has been fed by anti-Israel agitation on campus over the decades and yes, students are susceptible to witless radicalism in the best of circumstances. Yet the loathing of Israel is particularly intense because it is viewed as an outpost of Western civilization and all its alleged ills.

The hatred of Israel is tainted by and, in some cases, driven by anti-Semitism. Another way to look at it, though, is that it's not so much about hatred of the "other," as progressives put it, as hatred of ourselves and all our works.

It is, on one level, incorrect to consider Israel exclusively an artifact of the West. The Jews are indigenous to the region going back to Abraham, with their story caught up in the story of the land. A large proportion of the current population traces its origins from the Middle East and North Africa, rather than Europe.

The Jews are indigenous to the region going back to Abraham, with their story caught up in the story of the land.

But there is no doubt that Israel is a Western society - in its political system, in its respects for rights, in its innovative economy, in its

mores. Someone sitting in a coffee shop in Tel Aviv could easily think they were in any thriving coastal society in the West.

From any rational perspective, this would be something to celebrate. Many legitimate criticisms can be made of Israel, and indeed are a feature of the Israeli domestic debate itself, but there's no doubt that it is a flourishing society.

If Gaza were equally Westernized, it would be worrying about whether it's overbuilding seaside real estate rather than having to get water and electricity from the neighboring country its governing authority -- a savage terror group -- is trying to destroy.

Yet this is the society that anti-Western opinion holds up and wants to sweep all before it. This point of view loves Gaza for its failure and hates Israel for its success; loves Gaza for its terror and hates Israel for its self-defense; loves Gaza for its vicious anti-Western sponsors and hates Israel for its Western allies, especially the United States.

If this seems perverse, it's what you'd expect of students and young people who have absorbed the premises of Michel Foucault, Howard Zinn, Edward Said and their imitators. Even if students have never heard of them, these men and their thought suffuse higher education.

But what about the violence? How

Please see EDITORIAL on P. 9

The Ranchos Independent

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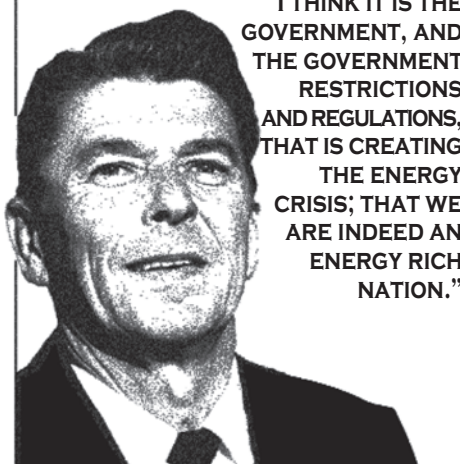
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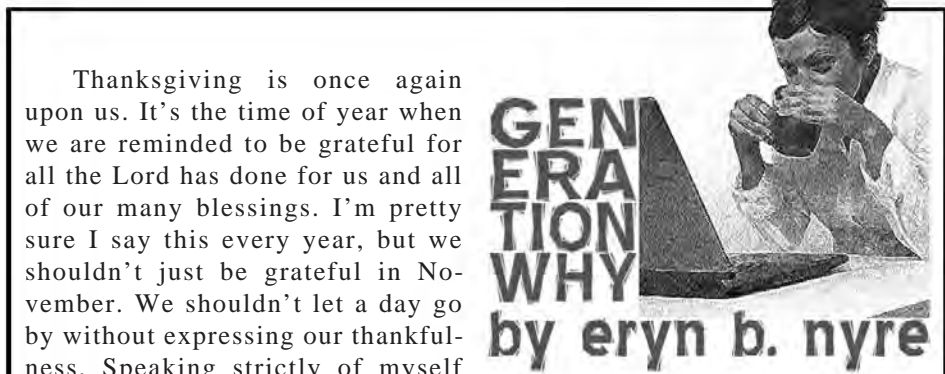
THE RAY GUN SHOOTING STRAIGHT TO THE HEART



"I THINK IT IS THE GOVERNMENT, AND THE GOVERNMENT RESTRICTIONS AND REGULATIONS, THAT IS CREATING THE ENERGY CRISIS; THAT WE ARE INDEED AN ENERGY RICH NATION."

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

Thankful? Let Me Tell You ...



Thanksgiving is once again upon us. It's the time of year when we are reminded to be grateful for all the Lord has done for us and all of our many blessings. I'm pretty sure I say this every year, but we shouldn't just be grateful in November. We shouldn't let a day go by without expressing our thankfulness. Speaking strictly of myself here, but I know I should be better about starting each day with prayerful gratitude and a thankful heart. Still, Thanksgiving is the theme of the season, so it will, therefore, be the theme of this month's essay.

I doubt I'm alone when I say this, but sometimes it's hard to find things for which to be thankful. We all face hardships, sickness, financial problems, family issues, etc. The list goes on and on. There are days where finding anything to be grateful for just feels impossible because our hearts and minds are heavy with pain and sadness. It's these moments,

I'm grateful for the people in my life who care about me and make me laugh. It's good to be surrounded by those who will lift you up when life feels a little too tough. I have a good group of core people who do that for me.

however, that it's most important to remember our blessings. As it says in 1 Thessalonians 5:18, "Be thankful in all circumstances ..." because it is through gratitude that we remember all of the blessings we have, even in the midst of the struggles. So, for anyone out there facing a sad or painful holiday season, it's probably more important now than ever to focus on all the things God has provided for us.

As for me, I'm first and foremost grateful for Jesus Christ and His atonement. I'm grateful for the Grace of God, a gift from our loving Father in Heaven who sent His only Son to redeem all of us. I didn't deserve it, I can do nothing to earn it, but through faith in Christ I am saved. I'm grateful for the Word of God, which teaches me and assures me of my salvation. I am so thankful that I can turn to His word when I am confused or conflicted or just need guidance in some way. God is truly good.

I am grateful for my father.

He's a good man with a big heart and a weird sense of humor. Not everyone gets him, but luckily he shared that twisted sense of humor with me, so I get him – for the most part, anyway. I'm grateful that he taught me how to be rational and logical. I'm grateful that he taught me right from wrong. I'm grateful

that he taught me accountability and how to be responsible. I am the woman I am because of the father I have had in my corner my whole life. I'm grateful for my mom. I miss her every single day, but I was blessed to

have had many wonderful years with her. I'm grateful that she taught me how to be kind and compassionate. I'm grateful that she taught me how to love and forgive. She was always a constant, nurturing presence in my life. She was the best cheerleader a girl could have asked for, and I have the confidence to pursue my dreams because of the support and encouragement she always gave me.

I'm grateful to have a job in this economy. It may not be the best job, and I may have to deal with an inordinate level of poor leadership, but it's decent and it pays the bills. I've spent the last couple of months looking for something else, something better, and it's a tough market out there. Since it hasn't been easy to jump ship, I feel grateful that I'm currently employed while conducting the search. It would be significantly more stressful if I were trying to do this without a steady

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

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GEN WHY cont. from P. 6

paycheck coming in at the same time.

I'm grateful for the people in my life who care about me and make me laugh. It's good to be surrounded by those who will lift you up when life feels a little too tough. I have a good

group of core people who do that for me. They celebrate wins with me and help carry me through losses. Life would be infinitely less joyful without them.

I am a firm believer that there is always something for which to be grateful. It's okay if you feel you're struggling to find it, just keep looking. It's there. Sometimes it's in the little things. The tender mercies God bestows upon us. It doesn't mean that

those struggles you're facing, or the pain you're feeling, aren't real or valid, but when you focus on the blessings it helps you get through the trying times.

So, this Thanksgiving, no matter what you're facing, find a way to stay grateful. Not because the trials aren't

real. Not because the pain you feel, be it physical or emotional, isn't real. But because that's how we make it through.

We thank God for waking us up, for giving us breath, for our food and our shelter. We rely on God to provide for us, then we show gratitude when he does.

I hope you all have a happy and joyous Thanksgiving filled with God's love, family, friends and peace.

I am a firm believer that there is always something for which to be grateful.



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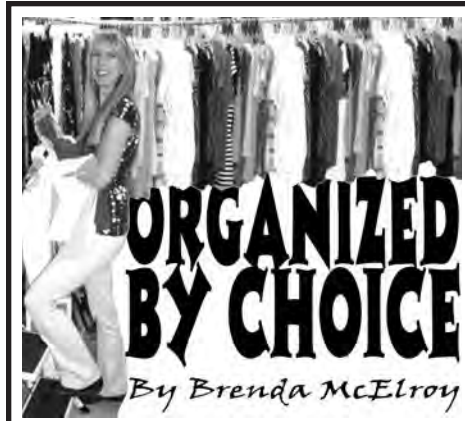
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The Power of Thanks

I believe objects are inanimate. I talk to myself, but not often to my things. The other day as I was placing a top into my donate bag, I said, "Thanks for your service." Unsurprisingly it didn't respond, but I was surprised that I felt better about letting it go.

Saying "thank you" is something we do at the completion of things — receiving a gift, eating a meal, checking out at the grocery store. In the case of my

"There is no pit so deep that God's love is not deeper still."

top, saying "thank you" was for my benefit. It helped finalize my decision to let it go. My top had completed its mission.

Through the years our needs, interests, abilities, and preferences change. This requires adding new and subtracting the old items that have completed their mission. If you find it helpful, finalize your relationship with the old things by thanking them for their service. If they still have some "mission" left in them, donate them so they can once again find a place of use.

By subtracting things that complete their mission, you're adding space. You no longer cringe when opening cabinet doors and drawers. It's easier to find and access what you need. You save money by not replacing things you can't find, like pantry items, clothes and tools. You're not distracted from things you enjoy by piles of stuff waiting to be dealt with.

You can be at peace opening your door to guests. All are triggers for giving thanks.

I'd like to share a remarkable true story. In the early 1940s when Nazi Germany invaded Holland, Corrie ten Boom and her family began the dangerous mission of hiding Jews and helping them escape. Corrie's family was eventually arrested. When she and her sister, Betsie, arrived at Ravensbruck concentration camp their "beds" were rancid straw-covered platforms stacked three high and infested with fleas.

"How can we live in such a place?" cried Corrie. Betsie immediately reached for the small Bible the sisters had smuggled in. Turning to 1 Thessalonians 5:18 she had Corrie read, "... give thanks in all circumstances; for this is

God's will for you in Christ Jesus." Corrie resisted Betsie's urge to thank God in the midst of fleas, but in

time they realized it was the fleas that kept the abusive guards at bay, protecting them and allowing them to share the comforting, hope-giving word of God with the women who shared their desperate situation.

Corrie was the only one of her family to survive and see freedom again. Her testimony is this: "There is no pit so deep that God's love is not deeper still." This Thanksgiving season you may be in despair or facing big challenges. May Corrie's testimony draw you to Jesus and His life-giving word. *Every experience God gives us ... is the perfect preparation for the future only He can see.* — Corrie ten Boom (You can read Corrie ten Boom's entire story in the book *The Hiding Place*.)

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

Gobbling Thanksgiving

(November 2013)

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

It's Thanksgiving – hope everyone is ready for the big dinner. Of course, I'm speaking of turkey and all the trimmings, but I know some people that don't have turkey – either they just don't like it or like something else better. I was watching a TV show the other day and the person on the show was cooking a pork loin roast that his family was going to have. Then I know a family that every year their daughter, their only child, chooses a different country and they have the food native to that country. The last time I talked to her they were going to have food from India.

To me, Thanksgiving isn't what you eat; it's who you eat it with: Family! Nothing better than sitting around a table of food and fellowshiping with the people in your life that mean the most to you. That being said, however, my favorite meal for Thanksgiving is still turkey with everything that goes with it and one of the things I like best about the dinner is the leftovers. Oh, I know you say, "I can't eat another turkey sandwich," but I never tire of turkey, especially with cranberry sauce.

How about something else to use the turkey in other than sandwiches? (Even though I don't know how you can beat hot open-faced sandwiches with mashed potatoes and gravy or cold sandwiches with cranberry sauce).

Most everyone I know likes soup of some kind. I found a couple of recipes I'll pass on to you.

Tex-Mex Soup

For those family members that we aren't able to be with, call them to tell them how much you love them and how thankful you are that they are in your life. We never know what tomorrow may bring.

1 T Olive Oil
 ½ C minced onion
 3 cloves garlic, minced
 2 tsp. chili powder
 ½ tsp. oregano
 ½ tsp. cumin
 4 C. water
 1 can condensed tomato soup
 1 (28 ounce) can diced tomatoes
 1 C Salsa
 4 C shredded cooked turkey
 1 T. dried parsley

3 chicken bouillon cubes
 1 can black beans, rinsed and drained
 2 C frozen corn
 ½ C sour cream
 ¼ C chopped fresh cilantro (optional)
 Heat olive oil in large sauce pan over medium heat. Add minced onion and cook until onions begin to soften. Add garlic, chili powder, cumin and oregano and cook, stirring for one more minute.

Stir in water, tomato soup, diced tomatoes, salsa, shredded turkey, parsley, and bouillon cubes. Bring to a boil then reduce heat and simmer 5 minutes or until bouillon cubes are dissolved. Add black beans, corn, sour cream and cilantro (if using). Simmer for 20 to 30 minutes.

Top with your choice of any or all of the following: Crushed corn tortilla chips, chopped green onions, shredded cheddar or Monterey jack cheese, sour cream and shredded cilantro.

If you're not in the mood for a spicy soup, how about chowder?

Turkey Chowder

1 T butter
 ½ C chopped onion
 2 C water
 4 medium red potatoes, scrubbed and cut into ½ inch cubes (about 2 cups)
 2 cups milk

1 package creamy gravy mix
 2 cups shredded cooked turkey
 1 can (8 ¾ ounce) whole kernel corn, undrained
 1 tsp. sage – rubbed

Melt butter in large saucepan over medium heat. Add onions and cook and stir 3 minutes. Add water and potatoes and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low, cover and simmer 5 minutes or until potatoes are tender.

In separate bowl stir milk into gravy mix until smooth. Stir into saucepan. Add turkey, corn and sage. Bring to a boil on medium heat. Reduce heat to low cover and simmer 10 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Or, if soup doesn't strike your fancy, how about some enchiladas?

Turkey Enchiladas

2 C shredded cheese (Cheddar

and Monterey Jack is recommended)

1 onion, chopped
 1 (2 ounce) can diced black olives

24 (6 Inch) corn tortillas
 1 (19 ounce) can red enchilada sauce

4 cups shredded cooked turkey
 Preheat oven to 350. Lightly grease a 9x13 baking dish.

In a small bowl, combine the cheese, onion and black olives. Pour enchilada sauce into a shallow plate (pie plate works well).

In a small skillet, heat enough oil to lightly coat one tortilla, and cook until soft. Remove and dip in enchilada sauce to coat. Lay on plate.

Put some of the cheese mixture in center of tortilla and then

Please see **RECIPES** on P. 15

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*In Everything
Give Thanks!*



1 Thessalonians 5:18

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The Bookshelf

New Traditions at Ranchos Library

By Jerrica Edmundson

This has been an amazing month at the Ranchos Library, going right along with how fantastic this year has been overall. We started what will hopefully become a new tradition here: Public Safety Story Time Month. For this, we were visited by public safety heroes in the area, starting with the lovely gentlemen from Fire Station 19 right here in the Ranchos, who were so kind as to not only read a story to the kids but bring their trucks for exploration as well. The month ends with two separate visits from the Madera County Sheriff's office — with Sheriff Pogue even coming by on the 30th to share his experience on the force with the kids, familiarizing them with our local safety heroes. Look for this next November, as we plan on making it even more amazing next year.

There has been a great response in people looking forward to our new magazine subscriptions, and they are in process so we will have those soon, but as it stands, we have added the Wall Street Journal to our arsenal of newspaper offerings in the branch, along with the Fresno Bee, Madera Tribune and our very own Ranchos Independent. With these, they are readily available daily for browsing in our comfy seating areas for anyone interested.

Returning on Dec. 1 is our Zip Books program, where you are able to directly influence our library collection by requesting books through our website (zipbooks.maderalibrary.org) and so long as they have been published in the last 10 years, are able to be catalogued and aren't already owned by the Madera County Library, they will be sent directly to your house, with a due date back to the library just like a normal book. Every Madera County Library patron is allowed one book request at a time and up to three books per

month while the funds remain available. We would like to make a huge shout out to the California Library Association for making this program available to us.

In the next month, you will see a great new addition to the library in the form of two amazing murals in our children's section, created by our very own Jason Napier who was the art teacher here at Liberty High School for some time. He will be bringing a team of a few local artists to help get this put up, and thanks to the Friends of the Ranchos Library's funding, we will have some gorgeous wall murals to look at in the kid's area, although there may be some limits to availability in the area while the project is ongoing.

Thanks to an amazing gift from Advanced Auto Parts, we will be receiving a second set of state and country profile books for children to have access to for state and county reports. This allows us to have up-to-date information in our books and we love being able to help teach kids how to access relevant and up-to-date information.

As always, if there is ever anything you would like to see happen here at the library, let us know. We are always looking for new and innovative ways to reach out to the community and can't do it without you.

The Madera Ranchos Library

37398 Berkshire Drive
559-645-1214

Sunday and Monday Closed

Tuesday 11 a.m. – 6 p.m.

Wednesday and Thursday

11 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Friday and Saturday

11 a.m. – 3 p.m.

www.MaderaCountyLibrary.org

EDITORIAL cont. from P. 5

can these kids look past it, or implicitly endorse it?

Violence is part of the radical anti-Western vision. The anti-colonial bible, *The Wretched of the Earth*, written by Frantz Fanon in 1961, is widely taught on campus. Fanon sketched out a woke worldview before anyone used that term, arguing that, as a New Yorker essay put it, "the Western bourgeoisie was 'fundamentally racist' and its 'bourgeois ideology' of equality and dignity was merely a

cover for capitalist-imperialist rapacity."

Fanon wrote that "decolonization is always a violent phenomenon," and in a preface to the book, the French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre declared that the wretched of the earth "become men" through "mad fury."

By this standard, Hamas is a good and worthy anti-colonial organization, and there's no wonder it has found supporters and useful idiots among the West's self-loathing radicals.

Rich Lowry is editor of the *National Review*.

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*Senior Report***It's Time to Ring in the Holidays at the Ranchos/Hills Senior Center**By *Melanie Williams*

The Holiday Craft Fair in October drew in a crowd of interesting buyers and sellers this year to the Ranchos/Hills Senior Center. The vendors were varied as they showcased many different crafts for the holiday season. We had vendors who sold handcrafted jewelry, decorative holiday items, essential oils and handmade crocheted items.

The local Boy Scout Troop and the local Volunteer Firefighters had a fundraising booth at the Holiday Craft Fair and Mary Thompson was the recipient of the beautiful quilt donated by former member, Dot Husted. Thank you for all the community support and participation this year, as well as previous donations supporting our fundraising events. Judy Sears worked tirelessly to provide a good experience for our participating vendors.

The leading members who provided the BBQ at the Holiday Craft Fair were Kandace Reeves and Mike Fursman, who expertly manned the grill and provided delicious hamburgers and hot dogs with all the fixings. Diane Maxfield was in charge of cultivating some beautiful varieties of Iris plants for sale in the Scout Garden this year and Carrie Bennett coordinated publicity and community support of the Holiday Craft Fair.

Mary Orcutt and Carol Wood were instrumental in highlighting our vendors and their crafts on the internet, in What's Up in the Ranchos and a special "shout out" goes to the generous people at S & K Mini Mart for once again providing ice for the event and the wonderful staff at the Pizza Factory for their much-appreciated support in helping to advertise the Holiday Craft Fair again this year. We appreciate all the wonderful community members and the many volunteers of the

Ranchos/Hills Senior Center who helped to make the 2023 Holiday Craft Fair a success.

The Senior Meal Program is happening daily at the Senior Center. Any seniors, 60 years and older, living in the community or surrounding area, are encouraged to come and enjoy a hot meal and the company of your local senior community. Our partners in this program would like to expand this outreach to seniors who may not be getting out often, to come, enjoy a hearty hot lunch and visit with other seniors from the neighborhood. We are working with the Eastern Madera Recreation and Parks Department and the Fresno-Madera Agency on Aging to host this senior outreach program at the Ranchos/Hills Senior Center in the Madera Ranchos. Additional information can be provided by calling the Ranchos/Hills Senior Center at 559-645-4864 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Our next Monthly Sale is coming up on Saturday, Dec. 2 from 8 a.m. to noon and the Treasure House has lots of great stuff for the holidays being donated on a regular basis. Christmas items will be on display this month and new winter clothing, coats, jackets and sweaters for adults and children are on sale. The Boutique also has unique items just in time for holiday decorating. Thank you for all the wonderful Treasure House donations we receive from the community to support our outreach to local seniors.

The Christmas Potluck Dinner is on the December calendar. Don't miss the

installation of our new Board members at the festivities. A reminder to our Ranchos/Hills Senior members, the Senior Center will celebrate the December birthdays and anniversaries at the Christmas Potluck Dinner. Ruben and Darla Trujillo are again cooking a savory turkey and ham course. If you were not at the Thanksgiving Potluck, you missed out. It was

delicious. Please remember to thank Ruben and Darla for cooking such a delicious main course for both of our holiday potluck events.

We are looking forward to

another fun time of Christmas cheer and holiday celebration with the Ranchos/Hills Senior membership. December is a busy month for families and celebrations, so remember some important dates:

The Odd Fellows Breakfast is on Sunday, Dec. 17 from 7:30 to 11 a.m. They give the majority of their proceeds each month to different local charities in Madera County.

Brown Bag Day is on Wednesday, Dec. 20 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Ranchos/Hills Senior Center.

The Senior Center will be closed on Dec. 25 for Christmas Day. Merry Christmas from the members of the Ranchos/Hills Senior Center.

Thought for December: "Christmas is most truly Christmas when we celebrate it by giving the light of love to those who need it most." — Ruth Carter Stapleton



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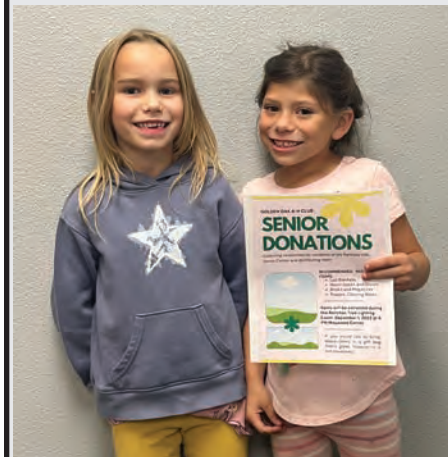
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Golden Oaks 4-H

By Griffen Williams-Smith

Coming up on Friday, Dec. 1 is the annual Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce Community Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony at the Maywood Center. Our Cloverbuds group is organizing a fun activity for our members – and

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



Two of the Golden Oaks 4-H Cloverbuds members are, from left, Elizabeth Morgan and Iris Garzon.

gmail.com

4-H has a long history of being involved in its communities and the Madera Ranchos is no exception. The leader of the Cloverbuds group, Jordan Morgan says, “We enjoy being a productive part of our community. Even our youngest members, the Cloverbuds, have something to contribute.” In addition to collecting these items, our 4-H club will have a table set up for kids and adults alike to fill out Christmas cards for the seniors at the Rancho/Hills Senior Center.

the community – to get involved with at the Tree Lighting.

Our 4-H group is also collecting items to donate to the Ranchos/Hills Senior Center for their amazing residents to use and enjoy. We are looking for items like lap blankets, warm socks for men and women, sensitive skin soaps and lotions, puzzle books, large print reading books and tabletop puzzles. Our 4-H group members are collecting items now through the Tree Lighting event. If you wish to donate items, you can give them to a Golden Oak 4-H member and you can also bring your items to the Ranchos Tree Lighting event on Dec. 1. If you have any questions, please reach out to Monique Morgan or Jennifer Williams-Garzon for details at 4hgoldenOak@

Sierra Shadows 4-H

By Mikayla Carr

The Sierra Shadows 4-H club wishes you a very Happy Thanksgiving.

We would like to introduce the 2023-2024 secretary of the Sierra Shadows 4-H club, Lucy Lee. Lucy has been involved in arts and crafts, horses and goats over the past few years. She states that her favorite group out of all of these is the goat group. She says this because she meets people with the same interests as her. She also gets to have goats, which she loves. She has been in 4-H for seven years. Her pets include a horse named Kit and a goat named Frankie.

Now it's time to learn about our one and only treasurer, Landon Davis. Landon has been in 4-H for four years and was involved in swine, poultry, rifle shooting, goats and public speaking. His favorite group is swine because he makes money selling his pigs. His pets include his goats Atlantic, Pacific, Snow White and Tiny. He also has a chicken named Pepper.



Two of the officers this year in the Sierra Shadows 4-H Club are Treasurer Landon Davis, left, and Secretary Lucy Lee.

Here is an inspiring quote to turn your frown upside down. "You are amazing, and you shouldn't let anyone tell you otherwise — no matter

Please see 4-H on P. 15

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The Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce

Annual Community Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony

Maywood Shopping Center • Friday, Dec. 1 • 6 p.m.

The Community Christmas Tree Lighting is coming to the Maywood Center on Friday, Dec. 1 at 6 p.m. Come join in the celebration that raises badly needed supplies for our Veterans at Veterans Hospital in Fresno while you get to enjoy snacks, beverages, a Christmas boutique, Christmas carols and a visit by Santa Claus himself.

Pick a star for a Veteran at the VA Hospital.
Items needed for Veterans: Instant coffee, white hand towels, white socks, lap blankets, toothpaste, toothbrushes, L and XL white t-shirts, new books. Items need to be returned to the Chamber office by Dec. 12. Gifts will be delivered to the Veterans at the VA Hospital in Fresno on Dec. 15 at 10 a.m. Call the Chamber at 645-4001 for complete details



11/23

The Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce's Annual
Chamber Christmas Mixer

Wednesday, December 13
6-7:30 p.m.

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Come enjoy our Christmas Mixer on Wednesday, Dec. 13 at 37167 Ave. 12 at 6:30 p.m. Call 645-4001 for more info.



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through the Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce and CASA

Bring a little sparkle of joy to a foster child this Christmas by stopping by the Chamber office and selecting an ornament with a child's name, age and gift request. The requests range from everything from a Barbie doll or soccer ball, to simple hair ribbons. Unwrapped items must be turned in to the Chamber office by December 15.

Call 645-4001 for more information.



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County Launches 2nd Annual 'Operation Green Light' for Vets



In celebration of National Veterans and Military Families Month, Madera County Board of Supervisors approved its second annual resolution for the Madera County Government Center building to be illuminated green for the remaining month of November, as part of Operation Green Light, a national collaborative initiative of the National Association of Counties to support military veterans, as well as raise awareness about the unique challenges faced by many veterans and the resources that are available at the county, state, and federal level to assist veterans and their families.

The national collaborative is spearheaded by the National Association of Counties and the National Association of County Veteran Service Officers, build-

ing upon the successful efforts of the New York State Association of Counties and the New York State County Veteran Service Officers' Association in 2021.

"After leaving the military, veterans face a number of challenges from mental health issues, physical disabilities, homelessness, relationship barriers, substance abuse, among others," said Josh Christopher, Madera County Veterans' Service Officer. "Operation Green Light is a small gesture to show support of the resources available for veterans."

By shining a green light, we let our veterans know that there is hope and support for them. While this event is focused around the week of Veterans Day (November 7 -12) participants are encouraged to continue shining the light year-round. Residents can share their participation on social media using the hashtag #OperationGreenLight. Visit naco.org/operationgreenlight or maderacounty.com/government/veterans-service-office for more information and links to resources available to veterans.

In addition to lighting county buildings, residents and businesses are encouraged to participate in local Veterans Day events happening around Madera County. For more information on Veterans Day events visit Madera County's Facebook or Instagram page.

THANKS cont. from P. 2

always just that: things. Good things you got. Good things you earned. Good things that happened. This exercise ignores the forest for the trees. The pilgrims weren't thankful for this pumpkin or that gentle winter. They were thankful for a general state of providence. They were thankful for their day-to-day blessings — the small blessings that always seemed to come despite their seemingly incessant hardship.

And to whom did they give thanks for these things? To their benevolent, merciful God, who saw them safely across the sea, who gave them material for fires in the winter and who moved the hearts of indigenous people to provide assistance to the newcomers when they were able to do so. Further, they didn't thank God merely for the positive blessings they received. They gave thanks for the evils that did *not* befall them. They even thanked God for their hardships, a Christian habit discussed at length in the letters of Paul the Apostle.

To whom do we give thanks? Do we give thanks at all? Not really. We myopically reflect on the individual items and moments that gave us joy or sustenance. Few of us consider our general state of providence. We see the things we are thankful for as isolated reprieves from a life we too often view as difficult, tragic or un-

fair. Most of us remain oblivious that life in America today — even for the least "privileged" among us — entails a bounty of blessings that would have been unimaginable to our ancestors. This obliviousness is a mark of ingratitude.

A spirit of gratitude — the pathos that is supposed to define Thanksgiving — isn't just about the things that we have. Gratitude is a way of life: it means a habitual focus

A spirit of gratitude — the pathos that is supposed to define Thanksgiving — isn't just about the things that we have. Gratitude is a way of life ...

on the day-to-day plenitude of our lives. Amidst our material comfort, we take so much of what we have for granted, focusing instead on what we don't have, what we want (set the alarm for Black Friday!), and what

we want to happen. To the extent that we give thanks, we give it to the cosmos: we express our happiness that things just seemed to work out, as though our blessings are merely good luck or the reward of our own virtuous behavior or hard work.

To cultivate gratitude is to recognize one's blessings as gifts, often undeserved ones, from a God who loves us and continues to provide for us, in spite of our vanity, our ignorance and our misdeeds. This Thanksgiving, rather than naming the things for which you and your family are grateful, you might discuss what gratitude is, how one lives it, how one gives it, and to whom it ought to be given.

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SEMUCU speaks

By Igal Treibatch

A sad loss to our community Jeff McGrath, a model in any community, has passed recently from a bout with liver cancer at the age of 76. As far as we were concerned, nothing was wrong. Jeff didn't talk much about his ailment. It seems that he suffered quietly without stopping his work with his community.

Jeff was born in November 1947, graduated from West Hampton High school in New York and received his AA degree as part of his association with the military. From 1967 he served his country as part of the Army for three years, after which he served for 20 years as a reservist and worked for AT&T at

the same time.

In 1970 Jeff married Judy, had a son and a daughter and as of today they also have four grandchildren. Jeff and Judy moved to the Ranchos in 2005. Jeff has been active in the Ranchos community as part of "Friends of the Library," "Seniors in Retirement," a Board Member of SEMCU, a Board Member of "Bobcat Fifth Infantry" and a member of the Lutheran Church of Fresno, in which he volunteered every Friday to help with maintaining the church in good condition.

Jeff enjoyed woodworking and loved scuba diving, which he was able to take part in all over the world. We will miss his intelligence, his energy and enthusiasm, his logical views on things and his



good manners.

Goodbye old friend.

To anyone who may be interested in helping our community by participating as a SEMCU board member, SEMCU convenes for only one hour on the third Monday of every month starting at 6 p.m. Our next meeting is Monday, Nov. 21.

To participate in the board's conference meeting via telephone or video call 312-757-3121 and you will get prompted to input the access code 715657949#

To reach SEMCU for more information or suggestions, call 559-363-9095, or reach us at www.semcu.org or by email at info@semcu.org.

SEMUCU is "By the Community, For the Community"

SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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RECIPES cont. from P. 8

some of the turkey. Roll and place in the prepared pan. Repeat until bottom layer of pan is covered with enchiladas. Spread enough sauce over bottom layer to cover. Repeat process with second layer. Spread remaining sauce on top of enchiladas and sprinkle with remaining cheese mixture. Bake in

preheated oven 20 minutes or until bubbly and cheese is melted.

I want to wish you all a Happy Thanksgiving and hope you are able to be with as many of your family as possible. For those family members that we aren't able to be with, call them to tell them how much you love them and how thankful you are that they are in your life. We never know what tomorrow may bring.

4-H cont. from P. 11

what. – Brayon Collins.

Coming up in 4-H, we have the Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce Community Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony. The Sierra Shadows members help the community each year by volunteering for the Tree Lighting. The members help out by baking treats, planning games, setting up craft booths and even singing Christmas carols. This event is located at the Flipside parking lot at the

Maywood Center, where a visitor from the North Pole comes in a firetruck. I won't say who, but here is a hint: Ho Ho Ho. We also have the local veterans providing the presentation of colors and the Pledge of Allegiance. Then, at the end of the service, they turn on the Christmas tree lights.

Another upcoming event is the Sierra Shadows Christmas party next month. We have two amazing officers in the Sierra Shadows 4-H club, and many fun Christmas events are upcoming.

- Hummingbirds are the only birds that can fly backward. In fact, they're so impressive in the air that they've been referred to as the "flying ninja."
- And speaking of flying, fruit flies can turn in midair simply by shrugging their shoulders.
- Want to feel safer while driving? White cars are considered the safest color because they typically stand out against black roads. Statistics have also shown that they're 12 percent less likely to be involved in an accident than black cars.
- Forefingers possess the highest dexterity among their eight neighbors.
- If you ever visit China, don't hug a tree! The act was forbidden after a mass tree hugging occurred outside of China's imperial garden and the Chinese government speculated that the huggers were part of a suspicious cult.
- Until it actually blows against something, wind makes no sound.
- Gold will never erode because it is chemically inert, meaning it doesn't react to oxygen in the atmosphere.
- Earlier this year, Taylor Swift's "Eras" tour performances registered as a 2.3 earthquake on seismometers in Seattle due to the collective dancing of her enthusiastic fans. The activity was compared to 2011's "Beast Quake," in which Seattle Seahawks fans shook the ground as they celebrated a touchdown, but Ms. Swift's lasted longer.
- During the 12th century, tennis was first played in France, but without rackets. Instead, players used the palms of their hands to lob the ball back to their opponents.
- Humans' ability to detect and discern scents fluctuates throughout the day, peaking during the late hours when environmental stimuli decrease, likely due to changes in body temperature and brain activity.
- Thought for the Day: *"For pilgrims walking ... every footfall is doubled, landing at once on the actual road and also on the path of faith."* -- Robert Macfarlane



By Lucie Winborne

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Say you saw it in the Ranchos Independent

Kiwanis Korner

Kiwanis Service Award to VCH

By Sally Rowden

Leaves have been falling and it's darker earlier, bringing us into the Thanksgiving season. And the Kiwanis Club of Madera Ranchos has already begun expressing thanks.

Three of our members presented the Kiwanis Community Service Award to Valley Children's Hospital – Oncology Department on Thursday, Nov. 9, thanking Dr. John Gates and his team for their dedicated service to children within our communities and beyond. A plaque was presented with lunch provided. Dr. Gates personally gave our three members a tour of the oncology department and introduced his team of heroes.



Dr. John V. Gates, M.D., second from left, receives the Kiwanis Community Service Award for Valley Children's Hospital – Oncology Department from Ranchos Kiwanis members Richard Wayne, , Mona Diaz and Ollia Ridge.

Also on Thursday, Nov. 9, two of our members attended the Sierra View Elementary flag raising ceremony. The Sierra View spokesperson asked parents and/or family members that are veterans to please come forward so they could be honored for their service to our country. Their children were asked to come and stand with their parents

and/or family member veterans during the honor celebration. Thank you Sierra View Elementary for honoring veterans and the sincere words shared typifying the purpose of Veteran's Day.

Don't forget we're offering our Christmas Basket Raffle and the cost of raffle tickets is six tickets for \$5. The basket will be at our Christmas Tea and then we will set up different venues throughout the communities for folks to view and purchase tickets. The winner of the basket will be announced at our meeting on Dec. 14. You can also contact Sally Rowden at rowdensally2@gmail.com to request tickets.

We've once again changed our local meeting site. We will continue to meet the second and fourth Thursdays of every month. Both of our meetings will be held at Second Son Brews at 37167 Ave. 12, Suite 4C in the Madera Ranchos at 6 p.m. If you would like more information on attending a meeting, contact Sally Rowden at the email above.

While sitting in a doctor's office last week, I picked up a magazine and found some interesting information about how more humor in our everyday life is one of the "fastest and most powerful ways to increase our overall health and well-being," according to Steven M. Sultanoff, a clinical psychologist and professor at Pepperdine University. Five favorite ways were shared on how to lighten up your day with my personal favorite being attempting to acknowledge daily at least one thing that I giggled or smiled about. Allen Klein, author of The Healing Power of Humor, suggests this behavior and I've been challenging myself to identify things that make me giggle or smile every day. Klein indicates with this practiced behavior, "you'll likely find the funny in unexpected places — and laugh a lot more than usual."

The Kiwanis Club of the Madera Ranchos wants to send the warmest of wishes to all for a Happy Thanksgiving. www.RanchosKiwanis.com

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Wood Stove Control Program Starts

San Joaquin Valley residents have been asked to avoid burning wood this winter to help reduce harmful particulate matter 2.5 microns and smaller, or “PM2.5 emissions,” and heat their homes by means other than burning wood.

“We’re asking San Joaquin Valley residents to continue the cooperation that has had a direct, positive impact on public health,” said San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District Chief Communications Officer, Jaime Holt. “Choosing not to use your wood burning fireplace this winter is critical in our pollution reduction efforts and key to public health,” she said.

Residential wood burning is one of

the Valley’s largest sources of winter-time PM2.5 emissions and is shown to have a direct effect on neighborhood air quality.

The Residential Wood Smoke Reduction program runs from Nov. 1 through February. The District releases a daily, wood-burning status for each county, based on the air quality forecast and provides three burn status levels.

Daily burn information is available by visiting www.valleyair.org/burnstatus, by calling 1-800-SMOG INFO (800-766-4463), or by downloading the free “Valley Air” app on your mobile device. In addition, residents are invited to sign up for daily wood-burning email notifications.

Where does Madera Region Fall in California Auto Theft Numbers?

A recent report shows that vehicle thefts are spiking in some regions of the United States while they appear to be stabilizing in others. The annual Hot Spots report released by the National Insurance Crime Bureau, the insurance industry’s not-for-



profit association dedicated to preventing and combating insurance crime, shows metro areas and states with the highest rates of vehicle theft in 2022.

While Colorado topped the list of states with the highest vehicle theft rates, which increased in volume from 38,430 thefts in 2021 to 42,706 in 2022, California came in at sixth place. Nationwide there were 390 metropolitan areas that had excessive auto thefts. Out of 390 nationwide, 21 California cities made the list beginning with Bakersfield. First place in California and second place in the nation. The safest in California? San Luis Obispo/Paso Robles. Dead last of the 21 California cities and #214 out of the 390 nationwide.

The top 10 worst places to park your car in California? Here they are:

1. Bakersfield
2. San Francisco/Oakland/Berkley
3. Los Angeles/Long Beach/Anaheim
4. Redding

5. Vallejo
6. San Jose
7. Fresno
8. Visalia
9. Yuba City
10. Merced

Madera comes in at #18 out of 21 places in California, but #110 nationwide.

But you’re not out of the woods yet. Although Madera’s not that bad statewide or nationwide for auto theft, if you’ve got one of the following vehicles, you’re exactly what California car thieves are looking for:

1. 2001 Chevrolet Pickup (full size)
2. 2000 Honda Civic
3. 2006 Ford Pickup (full size)
4. 1997 Honda Accord
5. 2013 Hyundai Sonata
6. 2015 Kia Optima
7. 2001 GMC Pickup (full size)
8. 2001 Honda CR-V
9. 2007 Toyota Camry
10. 2002 Chevrolet Tahoe



Thankfulness, 2023 Style

By Betty Van Valkenburg

Since this is a political column, and a conservative one at that, not much can be written about our nation’s current situation that would elicit thankfulness. And frankly, not much that is positive is being stated by anyone, anywhere. Conversations with friends, loved ones, casual acquaintances, even strangers standing in line at the grocery store, seem invariably to include a litany of the nation’s problems, accompanied by the woeful shaking of heads and agreement that the country is in dire peril. Some diehard Democrats and liberals, and folks who previously wanted to hear nothing about political affairs, now wring their hands and clutch their empty wallets right along with seasoned conservative Republicans.

Conservatives who have stressed the importance of fiscal responsibility, limited government interference in our lives, strong national defense, cohesive family units, low taxes, safety, quality schools and the like can take no comfort in the conversion of those on the left who finally recognize the disastrous results of their liberal policies – but who, inexplicably, keep electing terrible politicians. We can only hope and pray that it is not too late to save the country from internal strife, from a deepening recession, from total lawlessness, from bankruptcy, from destructive hatred and from disintegration of the family. We can pray that common-sense legislation and proper law enforcement will help to make our streets, homes, businesses and schools safer once again. Oh yes, and that we can shop at the corner drug store where products are not locked away from innocent shoppers.

This Thanksgiving, we are not grateful for the political turmoil but give thanks that it isn’t worse.

Thankfully and importantly, we still enjoy the freedom of religion, and church doors remain open. Private organizations and local charities do good work for those in need. Medical advances extend lives and alleviate much suffering, thanks in part to

the generosity of Americans who donate hard-earned money to worthy causes.

Fortunately for humanity, the incessant climate change alarmism is a hoax (as Vivek Ramaswamy said at the first Republican debate) and not reality, and the earth is not burning up. What a relief! But hype and hysteria over supposed catastrophes are being used, purposely, to tighten the noose of government control over all segments of our lives and to provide trillions of dollars to government coffers. For example, the new Biden-Harris proposed “Actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and combat the climate crisis” lists trillions of dollars in costs.

Interestingly, “climate change” was formerly hyped as “global warming” by alarmists. And before that - because they couldn’t make up their minds whether the planet was going to warm or cool – they used the term “inadvertent climate modification.” Now the “battle against” so-called climate change is entrenched in all government entities, with the resulting rules and regulations and aforementioned exorbitant costs.

Thankfully, we still have the right to vote, but we must make sure the right is not abrogated and that our votes are properly counted. Evidence abounds that the last election was far from fair. An organization called Reform California has authored a statewide constitutional amendment to restore election integrity. It would require: 1. Verification of voter ID for any ballot counted; 2. Accurate maintenance of voter rolls; 3. Proper verification of ballot signatures, and 4. Audits of the election process to ensure full compliance with federal, state and local laws. Please go to ReformCalifornia.org for more information on how the organization is working toward fair elections and how you can help. This is a monumental undertaking and worthy of whatever help we can give.

Also, the hard-working Election Integrity Project California (EIPCa) is providing training to “... all who wish to observe the processing of mail-in, provisional and conditional ballots, all of which go through hundreds of hands and multiple stages of verification, validation and sometimes ‘remaking’ before being accepted and counted or being rejected.” This, too, is a worthwhile endeavor for anyone concerned with election integrity. Please sign up at eipca.com if you can help.

Happy Thanksgiving to one and all.

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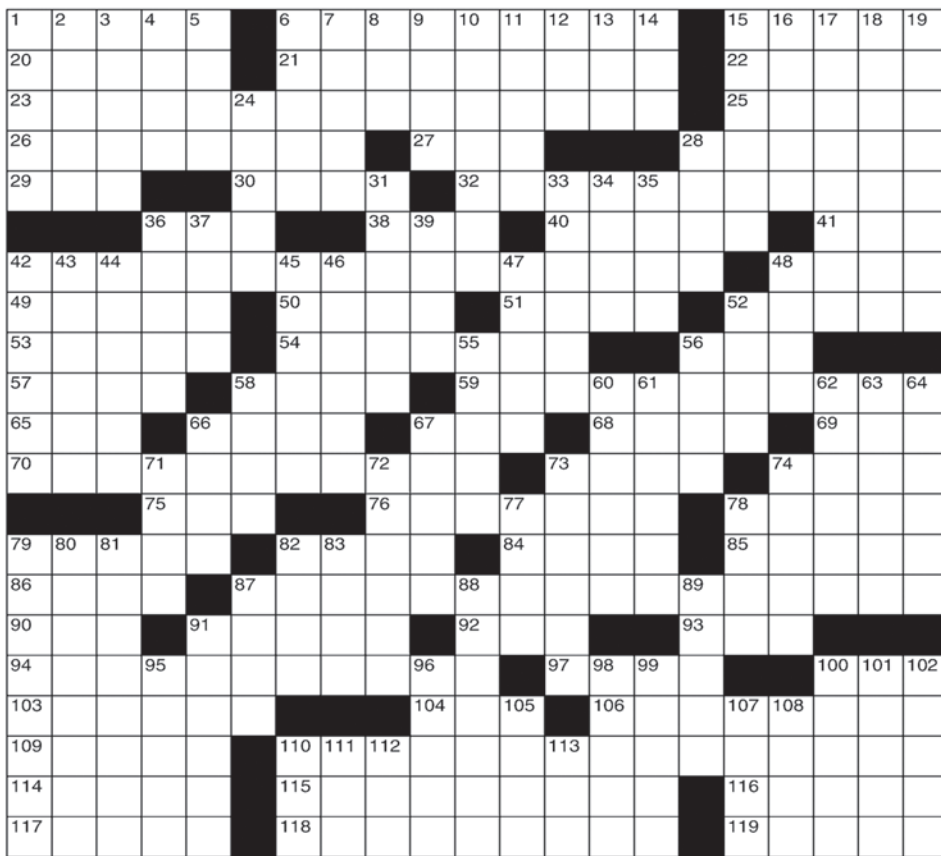
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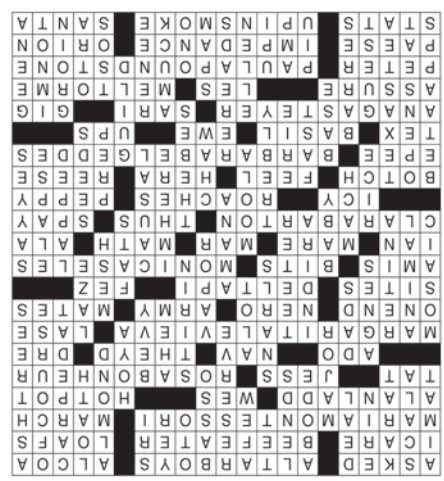
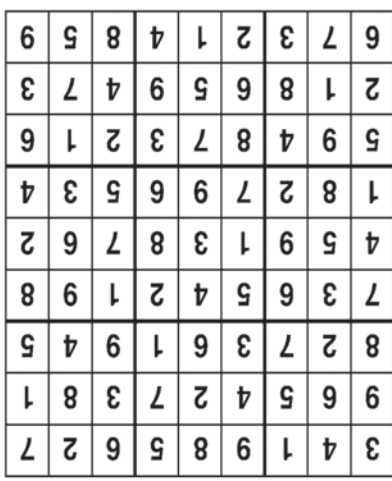
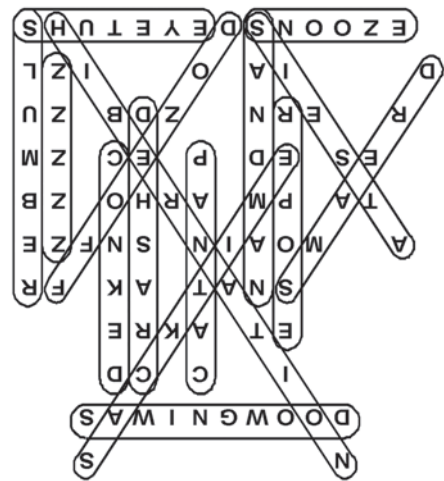
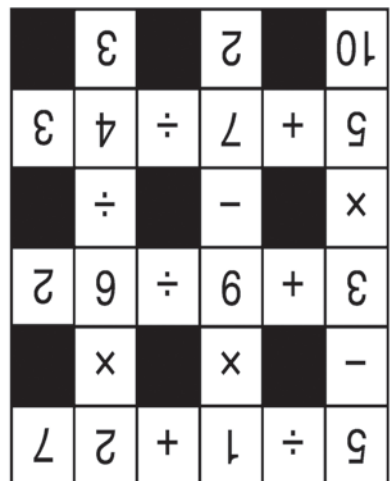
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Super Crossword



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WORD SEARCH



- ACROSS**
- 1 Requested
 - 6 Mass helpers
 - 15 Foil maker
 - 20 Empathetic declaration
 - 21 Steak lover, e.g.
 - 22 Lounges idly
 - 23 Italian developer of an educational method
 - 25 Third month
 - 26 "Two Years Before the Mast" star
 - 27 Film director Craven
 - 28 Family-style Chinese dish
 - 29 Body design, in brief
 - 30 The new girl on "New Girl"
 - 32 French painter of "The Horse Fair"
 - 36 Commotion
 - 38 The "N" of USNA: Abbr.
 - 40 "— never believe me!"
 - 41 Rap's "Dr."
 - 42 She played Abby Parker on HBO's "The Deuce"
 - 48 Cut with a light beam
 - 49 Continuously
 - 50 Cruel emperor
 - 51 Troop's group
 - 52 Partners
 - 53 Scenes
 - 54 Title sorority in a 1985 film
 - 56 Turkish cap
 - 57 French friends
 - 58 Smithereens
 - 59 Onetime rival of Steffi Graf
 - 65 Swimmer
 - 66 Farm female
 - 67 Disfigure
 - 68 Calculus, e.g.
 - 69 Made in the manner of
 - 70 American Red Cross founder
 - 73 Therefore
 - 74 Fix, as a pet
 - 75 Frigid
 - 76 House pests
 - 78 Spirited
 - 79 Flub up
 - 82 Sense by touch
 - 84 Zeus' wife
 - 85 Singer Della
 - 86 Fencing sword
 - 87 She played Miss Ellie Ewing on "Dallas"
 - 90 Gore— (rainwear fabric)
 - 91 Herb in pesto
 - 92 Farm female
 - 93 FedEx competitor
 - 94 1996-2002 "Saturday Night Live" cast member
 - 97 Agra apparel
 - 100 Band's job
 - 103 Guarantee
 - 104 The, to Henri Thorpe
 - 106 "Velvet Fog" vocalist
 - 109 Actor Falk
 - 110 Comedian with the 1990 HBO special "Cats, Cops and Stuff"
 - 114 Bel— (Italian cheese)
 - 115 Resistance to alternating current
 - 116 Hunter constellation
 - 117 RBIs, e.g.
 - 118 Engulfed by fire
 - 119 It can precede eight first names in this puzzle to form the names of California cities
- DOWN**
- 1 Get a lock on
 - 2 Milan's La —
 - 3 Gold purity unit
 - 4 St. Pat's land
 - 5 Bargain buy
 - 6 Home
 - 7 Advances, as money
 - 8 Vietnamese New Year
 - 9 Several
 - 10 Lay away
 - 11 Deep-voiced singer
 - 12 Siouan tribesperson
 - 13 "— out!"
 - 14 — Lankan
 - 15 Kind of nut
 - 16 Averse
 - 17 Criticized petulantly
 - 18 "No question"
 - 19 Some hardwoods
 - 24 Part of MLB
 - 28 Boxer Oscar de la —
 - 31 Curs' sounds
 - 33 Add while mixing
 - 34 Throat-clearing noise
 - 35 Flock of quail
 - 36 Dancer de Mille
 - 37 Pappies
 - 39 Boatloads
 - 42 Piece of tile art
 - 43 Zoo dweller
 - 44 Eyeball part
 - 45 India's Gandhi
 - 46 Be wobbly
 - 47 Fog or steam
 - 48 Lounge around
 - 52 Fishnet stuff
 - 55 Oven brand
 - 56 "Good" or "bad" dietary
 - 58 Bundle of joy
 - 60 Cry upon arriving
 - 61 Leading to something
 - 62 Drank like a dog or cat
 - 63 Go by
 - 64 Gives assent
 - 66 Speed-of-sound ratio
 - 67 Green stuff
 - 71 Paddy crop
 - 72 Like a tinny recording
 - 73 City of ancient Egypt
 - 74 Plants-to-be
 - 77 Tobacco plug
 - 78 Get set for surgery
 - 79 Test versions of smartphone programs, e.g.
 - 80 Vacant political position
 - 81 Oil, in slang
 - 82 High-speed
 - 83 A Great Lake
 - 87 Military post
 - 88 Scans again
 - 89 Artisans' club
 - 91 Rails in ballet
 - 95 Invited one
 - 96 Actress Page
 - 98 "Duck —" (Warner Bros. short)
 - 99 Zellweger of the screen
 - 100 Body part often pulled by an athlete
 - 101 "— buying it"
 - 102 "Hero" actress Davis
 - 105 Emailed junk
 - 107 General — chicken
 - 108 Other, in Oviedo
 - 110 More, in a music score
 - 111 Band blaster
 - 112 News svc.
 - 113 Vocalist Yoko

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1 2 3 4 5 5 6 7 9

	÷		+		7
-		x		x	
	+		÷		2
x		-		÷	
	+		÷		3
10		2		3	

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• "For that nagging toilet where the chain on the flush lever keeps getting stuck, here's what I do: Trash that chain and use some curling ribbon. Tie it on and adjust the length. Once you've got it set, you shouldn't have to mess with it again for a very long time!" -- M. in Minnesota



• Need pumpkin pie spice? Mix 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon, 1/4 teaspoon ginger, 1/8 teaspoon nutmeg and 1/8 teaspoon ground cloves for each teaspoon needed.

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• "I try to keep a backpack of 'just in case' items in my car trunk. In the summer it has sunblock and bug spray, etc. I have just refilled it for winter. There is a bottle of water, snack items as well as large towels that double as blankets, tools and a road flare, socks, an extra pair of shoes, etc. It pays to be safe!" -- C.C. in North Carolina

• Make your own "hot pocket" using rice: Fill an empty sock with rice to about three-fourths full. Tie or sew closed. Create a pouch by using a bandana to wrap it up; either tie or sew the bandana into a removable pocket. To use, microwave the sock for 1 to 1 1/2 minutes. Remove carefully. Remove bandana and wash from time to time.

• Here's a great cooking hint: When you want to sear meat, make sure you pat it dry using either paper towels or a kitchen cloth specifically for that purpose. Any moisture on the meat will cause it to steam cook.

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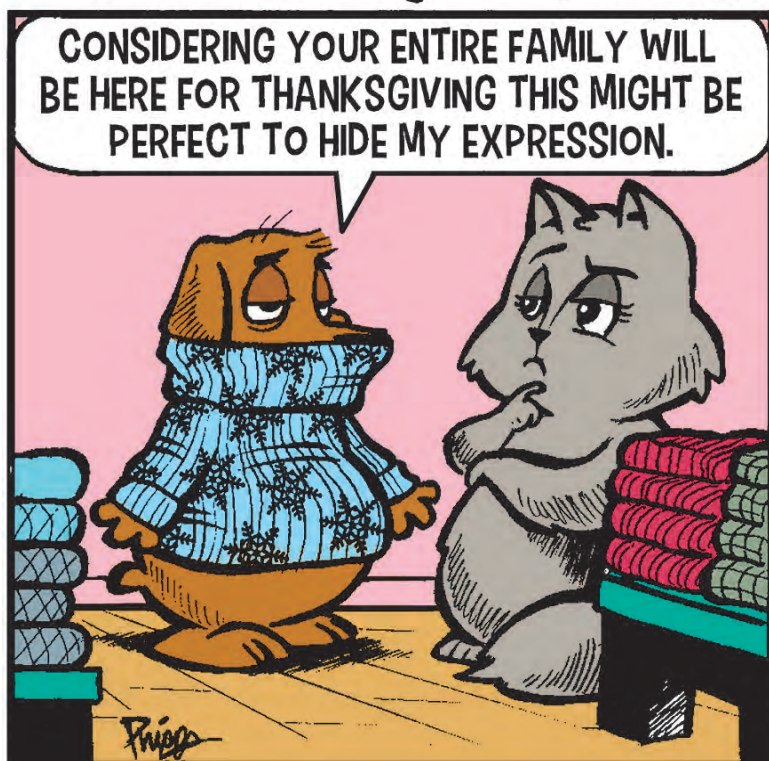
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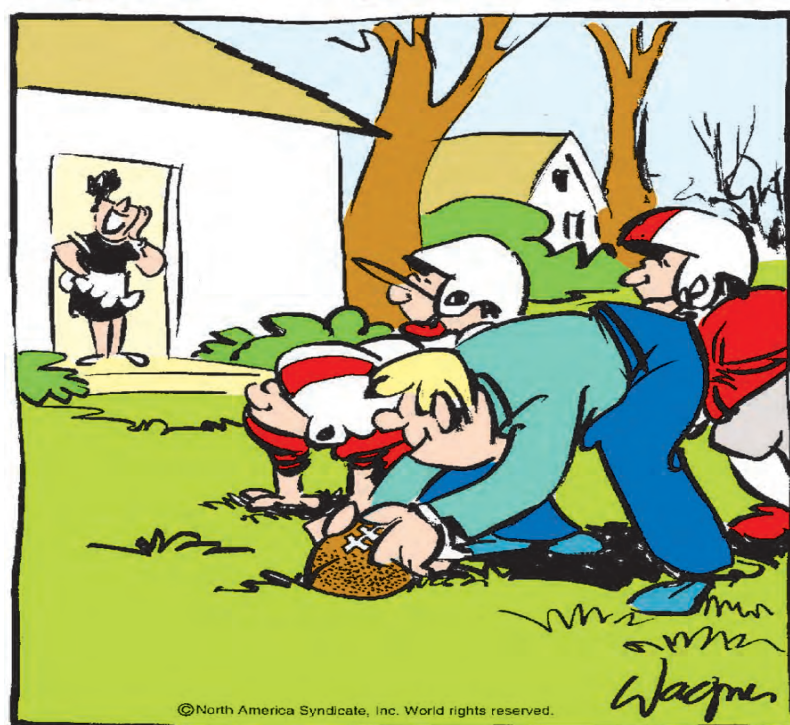


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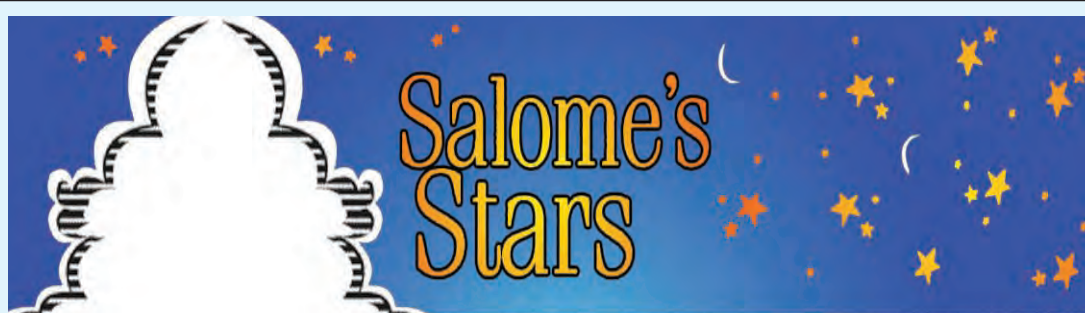
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GRIN and BEAR IT *Wagner*



“Concession stand’s open!”



ARIES (March 21 to April 19) There's no need for that suspicious Aries mind of yours to work overtime, either at home or on the job. Remember that appearances are often deceiving.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20) A new opportunity might seem riskier than you would like. Examine all sides; then rely on your good sense to guide you toward the right decision.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20) You might be enjoying your new relationship, but if you're still unsure of a commitment, continue to hold off. Your instincts are usually right.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22) You might feel under pressure these days, but be careful not to blow off steam in a way you'll later regret. Opt for a calm discussion to air out grievances.

LEO (July 23 to August 22) A difficult situation will need more than your personal charm to resolve it. Put that Leonine intelligence to work, and you'll soon come up with a prudent solution.

VIRGO (August 23 to September 22) A friend might resent your well-intended attempt to offer advice. Back off and let things settle down before you try again. Meanwhile, be cautious about investments.

LIBRA (September 23 to October 22) Be careful about taking on added obligations at work and/or in your personal life without first checking to see whether you can handle the extra load.

SCORPIO (October 23 to November 21) A rejection is no reason for you to give up. Check to see what went wrong and make adjustments. Then try again! Success is in your aspect.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22 to December 21) Things should be looking up at work, as your ideas begin to find favor with both bosses and co-workers. Romantic aspects also improve.

CAPRICORN (December 22 to January 19) Be more loving with your spouse or partner to prove that you're not taking them for granted. In addition, business deals will need careful scrutiny.

AQUARIUS (January 20 to February 18) As the holidays approach, be wary of those who can take unfair advantage of your generous nature. Also, an old injury flares up and needs attention.

PISCES (February 19 to March 20) Expect to see some old friends at upcoming holiday gatherings, including some who were -- and could once again be -- very special in your life.

Born this Week

You have a strong sense of responsibility, and whatever you decide to do, you do it to the best of your ability.

FUN PAGES

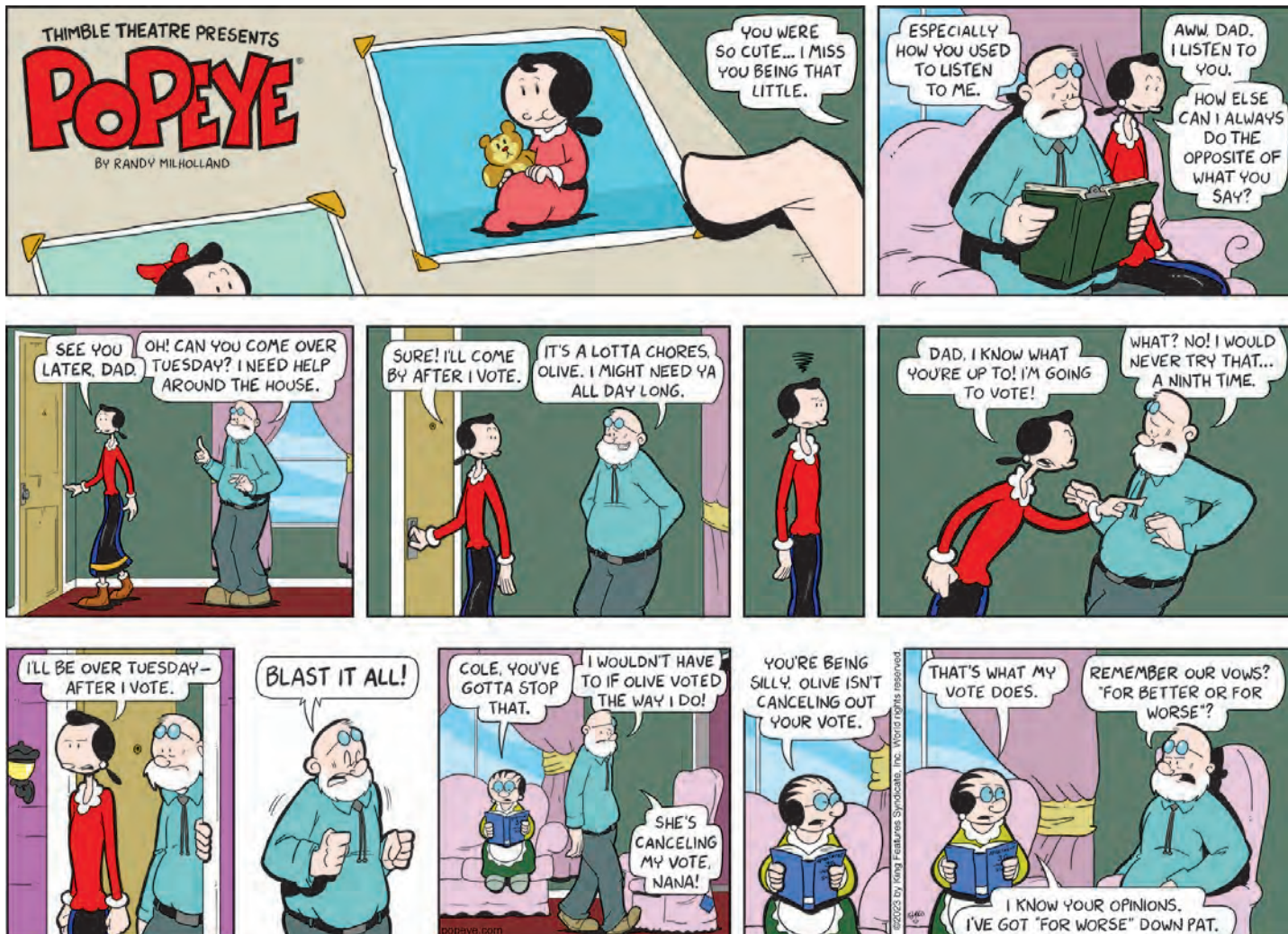
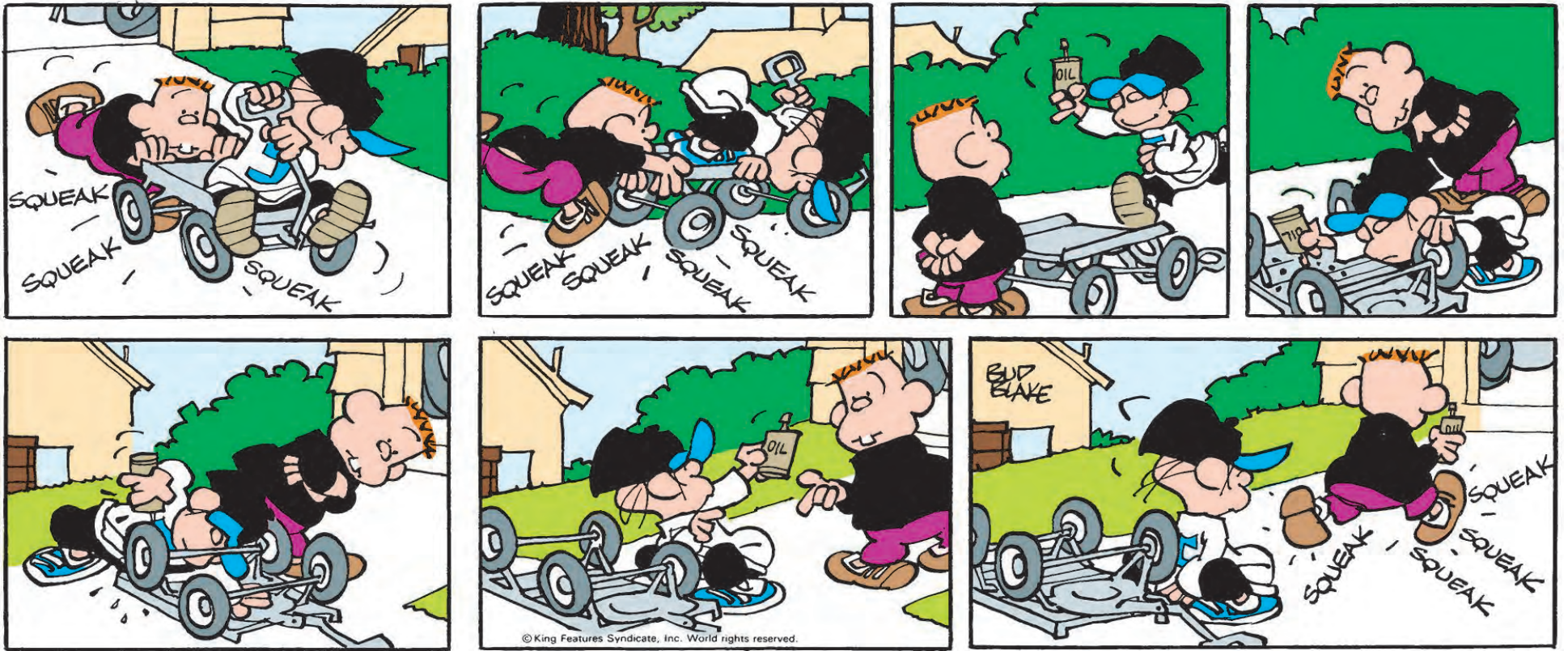
Kids' Maze



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TIGER

by BUD BLAKE



TRIVIA TEST

By Fiji Rodriguez

1. **GEOGRAPHY:** What is the second-largest country in South America? 2. **COMICS:** What is Dennis the Menace's last name? 3. **SCIENCE:** Who established the universal laws of motion in the 17th century? 4. **MOVIES:** What is the name of Marlon Brando's character in "A Streetcar Named Desire"? 5. **FOOD & DRINK:** What is The Dude's favorite beverage in "The Big Lebowski"? 6. **TELEVISION:** Which long-running TV comedy features a character named Diane Chambers? 7. **AD SLOGANS:** What item did this ad slogan say you should not leave home without? 8. **LANGUAGE:** What is chiaroscuro? 9. **HISTORY:** What was the name of the building where the former Beatle John Lennon was shot to death in 1980? 10. **ASTRONOMY:** Which planet in our solar system is covered in sulphuric acid clouds?

1. Argentina.
2. Mitchell.
3. Isaac Newton.
4. Stanley Kowalski.
5. White Russian.
6. "Cheers."
7. The American Express card.
8. Distribution of light and dark in drawing and painting.
9. The Dakota apartment building.
10. Venus.

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Click on "Local News" at

Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps



Intelligent Life

by David Reddick



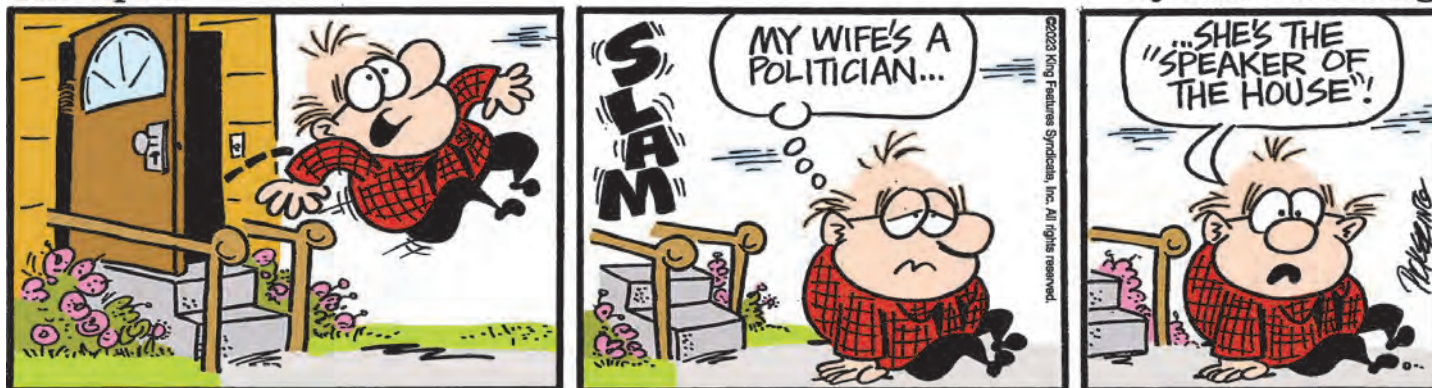
Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas



The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



1. What was the Bristol Stomp? 2. Name the first chart topper for Gladys Knight & the Pips. 3. Which group released "In the Still of the Night"? 4. Who was Jiles Perry Richardson Jr.? 5. Name the song that contains this lyric: "Come bring me your softness, Comfort me through all this madness."

1. A dance done to the song of the same name by The Dovells in 1961. See YouTube for examples of the dance. Don't miss the grandma in the patched jeans demonstrating the dance. 2. "Every Beat of My Heart," in 1961. They didn't have another No. 1 hit until "I Heard It Through the Grapevine" in 1967 and "If I Were Your Woman" in 1970. 3. The Five Satins, in 1956. It's been covered by numerous others and used in several films, including "Dirty Dancing" in 1987 and "The Irishman" in 2019. 4. Richardson, or JP, was "The Big Bopper," who wrote and released "Chantilly Lace" as well as many others. He died in 1959 in the plane crash that also killed Buddy Holly and Ritchie Valens. 5. "With You I'm Born Again," by Billy Preston and Syreeta Wright, in 1979. The song was used in the soundtrack of the 1979 film "Fast Break."

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SLEEP, GLORIOUS SLEEP

MAGIC MAZE ●

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

Find the listed words in the diagram. They run in all directions forward, backward, up, down and diagonally. Unlisted clue hint: A NUMBER OF WINKS

- | | | | |
|----------|-------------|-------------|---------|
| Catnap | Dreams | Sandman | Slumber |
| Conked | Hibernation | Sawing wood | Snooze |
| Crashed | Repose | Shut-eye | ZZZZZ |
| Doze off | Sack time | Siesta | |

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FUN PAGES

SEM CU

south east madera county united



**We mourn the loss of
our good friend and
a SEMCU Board Member,
Jeff McGrath,
to a bout with cancer.**

Jeff will be sorely missed.

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

Our next meeting is Monday, November 21 at 6 p.m.

**By telephone - dial: 312-757-3121 and you will get
prompted to input the access code 715657949#**

**By computer, tablet or phone - use the link -
<https://www.gotomeet.me/GreystoneConference>**

Please let us know if you have any questions.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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