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**DMV OFTEN FAILS
TO TAKE DRIVERS'
LICENSES ...**

**... EVEN
AFTER
SOMEONE
IS KILLED
ON THE ROAD.**

INVESTIGATIVE RESEARCH DISCOVERS



In This Issue

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By Robert Lewis

Officials may call driving a privilege, but they treat it as a right — often failing to take drivers' licenses even after they kill someone on the road.

The DMV is allowing some dangerous drivers to stay on the road.

Ervin Wyatt's history behind the wheel spreads across two pages of a recent court filing: Fleeing police. Fleeing police again. Running a red light. Causing a traffic collision. Driving without a license, four times. A dozen speeding tickets. Yet the California Department of Motor Vehicles issued him a license in 2019. Wyatt promptly got three more speeding tickets, court records show. Prosecutors say he was speeding again in 2023 when he lost control and crashed into oncoming traffic, killing three women. He's now facing murder charges in Stanislaus County.

The DMV routinely allows drivers like these — with horrifying histories of dangerous driving, including DUIs, crashes and numerous tickets — to continue to operate on our roadways, a CalMatters investigation has found. Too often they go on to kill. Many keep driving even after they kill. Some go on to kill again.

CalMatters reviewed vehicular manslaughter cases in California from 2019 through early 2024 to understand how the state handles dangerous drivers.

The court records and driving histories reveal a state so concerned with people having access to motor vehicles for work and life that it allows deadly drivers to share our roads despite the cost. Officials may call driving a privilege, but they treat it as a right — often failing to take drivers' licenses even after they kill someone on the road.

The DMV misses — or ignores — patterns of reckless behavior on the roads that persist for years, failing to stop dangerous drivers before they kill. The state system that targets motorists who rack up tickets is designed to catch clusters of reckless behavior, not long-term patterns.

The state suspends a driver's license for accumulating four points in a year, six points in two years or eight points in three years. What does it take to get that many

points? Using a cellphone while driving is zero points. A speeding ticket is a point. Vehicular manslaughter is two points. And while there are laws requiring the DMV to suspend a driver's license for certain crimes, like DUIs, there is no such requirement for many vehicular manslaughter convictions. It's often up to the DMV whether to act. Routinely it doesn't.

Nearly 40 percent of drivers charged with vehicular manslaughter since 2019 have a valid license, according to DMV records. That's about 1,000 out of 2,600 drivers for whom CalMatters obtained DMV reports. Drivers like Joshua Daugherty.

In July 2020, Daugherty drifted onto the highway shoulder while driving near



Mammoth Lakes, overcorrected to the left and lost control, court filings show. His Toyota Tacoma cut across the lane into oncoming traffic, where an SUV broadsided it. Daugherty's girlfriend, 25-year-old Krystal Kazmark, died.

In August 2009, in a strikingly similar incident, Daugherty was speeding along a Riverside County highway when his Ford Expedition drifted onto the shoulder. Witnesses told police he hit a dirt embankment and went airborne, the SUV flipping onto its roof. A 16-year-old girl riding in the back died. He was convicted of vehicular manslaughter in both cases. The DMV suspended his license after his conviction for killing Kazmark. But it wasn't enough to keep him off the road. Before he could report to jail, two months after the conviction, police caught him driving on a suspended license. The DMV reissued Daugherty a license in July 2024.

The DMV often takes no action against drivers convicted of killing someone on the road. State law requires the agency to strip motorists of their driving privileges for three years after a felony ve-

hicular manslaughter conviction, but there is no such requirement for most misdemeanor vehicular manslaughter convictions. It's up to the DMV whether to do anything.

CalMatters found nearly 200 drivers with a valid license whose DMV record shows a conviction for misdemeanor vehicular manslaughter but for whom there is no suspension listed. That includes truck driver Ramon Pacheco, who made a U-turn in front of an oncoming motorcycle, killing 29-year-old Dominic Lopez-Toney, who was finishing his rotations to be a doctor.

Court records show Pacheco had gotten in trouble behind the wheel before. He had been arrested for DUI in 2009, caused a collision in 2013 and got a ticket in 2016 for making an unsafe turn. Months after San Joaquin prosecutors charged Pacheco with vehicular manslaughter, he got into another collision for which he was also deemed most at fault. Pacheco ultimately pleaded no contest to misdemeanor manslaughter and received probation. His DMV record as of Feb. 11 indicates his driving privileges were never suspended; his commercial driver's license is valid.

Nora Lopez's 29-year-old son, Dominic, was struck and killed by a semi-truck driven by Pacheco days before Domenic started his surgical rotation at a San Joaquin hospital. In the wake of the tragedy, Lopez-Toney's mother has become an advocate for truck safety.

"Road safety and truck safety is not a priority right now with our legislators, with our government," Lopez said. "Changing our mindset, our attitudes, our culture on the roads is not impossible."

The DMV issued licenses to 150 drivers less than a year after they allegedly killed someone on the road. Prosecutors say Jadon Mendez was speeding in December 2021 in Santa Clara County when he lost control and caused a crash that killed a mother of three young children. A few weeks later, he got a speeding ticket, and yet, the DMV issued him his current driver's license on Jan. 27, 2022 — 49 days after the fatal crash. Mendez's manslaughter case is still open, and his license is still listed as valid.

Nearly 400 of the drivers charged

Please see **DMV** on P. 3

Kiwanis Korner

Kiwanis News

By Sally Rowden

A huge shout-out to Nathan Nguyen, a Junior at Liberty High School who's running for the Madera Ranchos Honorary Mayor position. Nathan is the Junior Class President, has over 300 community services hours and is a lifelong community resident and a Kiwanis Key Club Member. Remember voting is \$1 per vote. If you see donation jars in our community endorsing Nathan, please vote/donate.

We're gearing up for Flatlander's Day on Saturday, May 17. Thank you, Chairperson Katie Harr, for your planning expertise for this event. We will have the Panda Express Food Truck on site and a Wheel of Chance Game for the children. Plus, we will be selling raffle tickets, six for \$5, to win a well-supplied BBQ Raffle Basket that includes a handcrafted old-western dinner bell. Thank you goes to Rod Chaney for donating his craftsmanship.

Our John Minney — Liberty High School Scholarship Fundraiser continues. This is one of our primary yearly fundraiser projects supporting our graduating Liberty High School Seniors to further their funding for college endeavors. Graduating senior applications are in and the review process is in progress. Scholarship awards will be awarded in May.

We had two guest speakers at our meeting on Thursday, April 10. Kristen Mattox, Instructor and Athletic Coordinator of Madera Community College, gave an informative overview of the program's successes from both an athletic and academic viewpoint. Seventeen of the athletes will be honored on Wednesday, April 30, at the 29th Annual Kiwanis Torch of Excellence at the Clovis Veterans Memorial Building.

Then Lance Carter from the Liberty High School Music Boosters Club shared information on their Bingo Night coming on April 27 at Second Son Brews. Food will be provided by Pizza Factory. Sounds like an exciting local event. We donated \$250 in support of our LHS band students.

"The earth laughs in flowers."
... Ralph Waldo Emerson

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For those interested in the latest on coalition activity, please join us at our regular morning coffee meetings at IHOP restaurant at 2201 W. Cleveland Ave. in Madera. Our meetings start at 7 a.m. on Wednesday mornings. These meetings are open to community members.

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DMV cont. from P. 2

with killing someone got a ticket or were in another collision — or both — after their fatal crash. That's about 15 percent of the drivers for whom CalMatters got their DMV reports. While the reports don't indicate whether a driver was at fault in a crash, the records do suggest many drivers continue to drive dangerously even after killing someone on the road.

A commercial driver drove his semi-truck on the wrong side of the road into oncoming traffic, killing a motorcyclist in Kern County in 2021. Less than a year later, he still had a valid license when he barreled his semi into slow-moving traffic, hitting four vehicles and killing a woman in Fresno County, records show. Another man, sentenced to nine years in prison for killing two women while driving drunk, got his privileges restored by the DMV after being paroled, only to drive high on meth in Riverside and weave head-on into another car, killing a woman.

Hundreds of drivers have vehicular manslaughter or related convictions that don't appear in DMV records. The apparent error means some drivers who should have had their driving privileges suspended instead show up in DMV records as having a valid license.

Between March 2017 and March 2022, Trevor Cook received two citations for running red lights, got two speeding tickets and was deemed responsible for two collisions, including one in which someone was injured, court records show. Cook still had a valid license on April 14, 2022, a month after his last speeding ticket, when he blew through a Yolo County stop sign at more than 100 mph, killing Prajal Bista as Bista passed through the intersection on his way to work after dinner and a movie with his wife, according to details of the crash that prosecutors included in court filings. Bista was driving the speed limit and on track to

make it to work 30 minutes early. On March 28, 2024, Cook pleaded no contest to felony vehicular manslaughter.

The manslaughter conviction — like hundreds of others CalMatters found — isn't listed on Cook's driving record. The DMV issued Cook his current driver's license just a month after the conviction, agency records show. Less than two weeks after that, he got a ticket for disobeying a traffic signal.

"It's stunning to me that eight months later his license is still showing as valid and the conviction for killing someone while driving is not reflected in his driving record," said Melinda Aiello, chief deputy district attorney in Yolo County. "You killed somebody. I'd think there might be some license implications."

The DMV denied CalMatters' request to discuss its findings with Director Steve Gordon. Gordon instead issued a brief statement: "The modernization of our systems, including the launch of the Driver Safety Portal, reflects our ongoing commitment to enhancing accountability and transparency while continually refining our processes to ensure California's roads are safer for everyone."

Chris Orrock, a DMV spokesperson, said the agency follows the law when issuing licenses. "We use our authority as mandated and as necessary," he said.

Orrock said the DMV couldn't comment on individual drivers, but he and agency officials did explain what happens after a deadly collision, a process that's separate from any statutorily required suspensions following a conviction. When law enforcement reports a fatal crash, the agency's driver safety branch flags all drivers who might be at fault. It then looks into the collision and decides whether the agency should suspend those motorists' driving privileges. If the driver contests the

Please see DMV on P. 4

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DMV cont. from P. 3

action, there's a hearing that could include witness testimony. Suspensions are open-ended. Drivers need to ask for their license back, and agency personnel decide whether the suspension should end or continue. These discretionary suspensions typically last for about a year.

And while officials said the DMV can continue a suspension if they think a driver poses a danger, Orrock said they need to

give drivers an opportunity to get their license back. He said there's no process in the state "to permanently revoke a license."

This is the first story in a series by CalMatters about how California lets dangerous drivers stay on the road. Court research was done by Robert Lewis, Lauren Hepler, Anat Rubin, Sergio Olmos, Cayla Mihalovich, Ese Olumhense, Ko Bragg, Andrew Donohue and Jenna Peterson. This article originally appeared in CalMatters.org.



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Guest Editorial

“My Faith is Not a Costume”

By Hannah Nelson

The recent announcement that Cynthia Erivo, a queer woman, will portray Jesus Christ in a new production of Jesus Christ Superstar is yet another example of how Christian faith is treated as a costume—something to be altered, mocked, or reimagined to fit the latest cultural trends. This casting decision follows a broader pattern in which sacred traditions and deeply held beliefs are reduced to theatrical statements, detached from the truth and reverence they deserve.

For centuries, Christianity has been the target of mockery in entertainment, but in recent years, the irreverence has intensified. This decision to cast a woman as Christ, the Son of God, is not an artistic interpretation—it is a deliberate statement meant to reshape faith into something unrecognizable. Jesus was not an abstract symbol; He was a real man, born into a specific time and place; to change that fundamental truth for the sake of “progress” is to strip away the reality of His divine mission.

The Christian identity is being reconstructed into something fluid, something malleable, something that can be changed depending on cultural

whims. When faith is turned into a costume—something to be worn and discarded at will—it is no longer treated as sacred.

Christianity is not a backdrop for political statements. It is not a theater production. It is not a canvas for rewriting biblical truth. The life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ are the foundation of salvation, not an open-ended script to be edited by modern activists. The Son of God is not a role to be filled by the latest social justice icon.

... will we allow the world to dictate what our faith should look like?

F a i t h f u l Christians have the right to be outraged by this. It is not “bigotry” to insist that sacred truths remain sacred. The world

would never tolerate this level of distortion with any other faith. It is only Christianity that is repeatedly rewritten, remixed, and repurposed to serve whatever agenda is most fashionable.

From the earliest days, the Church shaped civilization—establishing hospitals, universities, and the foundations of law and morality. It was the Church that stood against tyranny, defended the dignity of life, and brought order to chaos. Much of the Church has grown comfortable and silent, unwilling to engage in so-called “political” issues. Meanwhile, the world has not stopped pushing its agenda. It has redefined marriage, stripped away the value of life, and now seeks to reshape the very identity of Christ Himself. This is not a coincidence—it is a deliberate attack on the truth, because Christianity holds power. A Church that stands firm in biblical truth is a Church that changes nations. But a Church that cowers in fear, unwilling to offend, becomes nothing more than a relic—powerless and ignored. The reality is this: Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Hebrews 13:8).

The Church was never meant to be passive. It was meant to be the salt and light of the earth, preserving truth and shining in the darkness. And now, as culture seeks to turn faith into a mockery, believers must decide: will we stand firm as the early Church did, or will we allow the world to dictate what our faith should look like?

Courtesy of AmericanFaith.com.

THE RAY GUN
SHOOTING STRAIGHT TO THE HEART

“EVERY DOLLAR THE GOVERNMENT SPENDS COMES OUT OF YOUR POCKETS. EVERY DOLLAR THE GOVERNMENT GIVES TO SOMEONE HAS TO FIRST BE TAKEN AWAY FROM SOMEONE ELSE.”

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

There's Always the Absence

You might think that writing about my mom would get easier with each passing year; that the memories would bring joy without tears because I had somehow gotten used to her absence. If you are part of the same sad club, you know you never really get used to it. I have just learned to deal with the gaping hole her passing left in my life. It will always be difficult to write about her, especially this time of year that's dedicated to the power and magic that is motherhood, but I do it because it's one of the ways I can honor who she was and how she always took care of me.

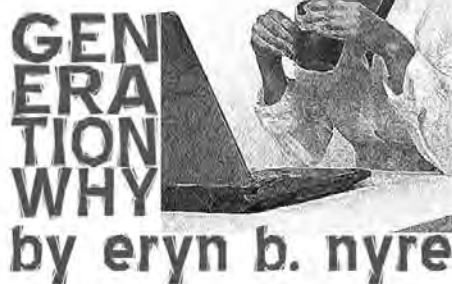
It's not that it's hard to come up with stories that highlight how remarkable my mom was. She was a loving mother, a doting wife and a caring friend. She was also funny, lighthearted and warm. People absolutely loved her. All my life my friends would want to come to my house because we had the good snacks and my mom. I would wake up after a sleepover to find my friends chatting with my mom at the kitchen table. To say I found that annoying is an understatement, but as an

adult I can absolutely see what all the fuss was about. Her very nature was so intoxicating it had the ability to draw in everyone, even surly teenagers.

As Mother's Day approaches, I often celebrate her memory by doing things she loved. I

listen to her favorite music like Reba McEntire and the Temptations. Saturdays in my childhood home were filled with the smells of Pine-Sol and the sounds of Motown and classic 80s Country. I would wake up and hear Mom singing while she scoured every nook and cranny of the home she already kept ridiculously clean.

Sometimes I make one of her favorite meals. Whenever she would come out and visit me in California, there were a few specific meals she would always request. Most commonly she asked for beef stroganoff, or parmesan chicken, or wedge salads with a balsamic glaze. My mom made sure we ate well. A hot meal was on the table every evening by the time dad came home, just like Donna and June. However, and I mean this with love, mom wasn't a cook. She made the same recipes that generally involved baking some meat, occasionally frying it, and



opening a can of vegetables and mixing some boxed potatoes. This isn't a complaint, she took good care of us, she just wasn't a cook. I was taught the basics of how to cook by her mother and sister, then I took to the internet and started learning different recipes. Mom was impressed well- beyond what my kitchen skills deserved, and she loved it when I cooked for her. When I make her favorite foods, I imagine her sitting next to me making her overly theatrical yummy noises so I knew she was loving it.

Sometimes I just curl up with a bowl of popcorn and a glass of cold milk (I

know how that sounds but that's a Brenda movie night staple, and it's fabulous!) and watch one of our favorite sad movies, Steel Magnolias, and just let myself cry. I cry for the characters, I cry for the memories, I cry for my loss, then I

laugh because I used to make fun of my mom for crying so easy. That woman cried at everything. She would even cry at commercials that weren't even sad. It was just a regular commercial but something about it hit her sentimental button and suddenly there she was snorting up the place because she had a heart bigger and more open than anyone I've ever met. I would laugh and tell her she was being a baby. She would roll her eyes and call me "the Tinman." I miss that. The amusing part is that now that she's gone, I cry all the dang time. Then I laugh as I imagine her giving me her best Cheshire cat grin and saying something like, "who's the baby now?"

I'm filled with gratitude for the countless ways she shaped my life. She taught me how to have compassion for

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

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GEN WHY cont. from P. 6

people. My mom was filled with so much love and empathy for her fellow humans that it was practically pouring out of her. She was a natural born mother. She mothered anyone who would let her, and even those who didn't. She was a surrogate mom to some of my friends, a couple of my cousins, and even a surrogate grandmother to many of the kids in her neighborhood. If you want to know what nurturing is, you need only look at how she treated everyone around her. When she loved you, you could feel it in the deepest parts of your soul.

I don't need to do anything special to

honor my mom, but these little acts of tribute allow me to feel connected to her even in her absence. In these moments, I am reminded that though she may not be physically here, the essence of who she was lives on through me and the memories we shared. For me, Mother's Day is partly a day of mourning as the grief takes hold, but it's also a day to celebrate the extraordinary woman who continues to inspire and guide me every day of my life.

For those of you who still have your mom here on earth, cherish the time you have. For those of you who, like me, had to say goodbye for now, make sure to take time to celebrate her and everything you shared together. Happy Mother's Day!



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Corpse Hunting

One of my long-term clients jokes that I know where all the bodies are buried. I assure you, there are no dead bodies at her house, but there may be a corpse or two. A corpse can be defined as “the remains of something discarded or defunct.”

Most corpses are stored in the garage, the attic, cabinets or cardboard boxes. Some in plain sight and you don't realize you're stepping over them to get to your car. Sometimes there's decay as well.

Before our move, we unearthed some corpses of our own that were dispersed or discarded. I don't miss a thing.

Spring is corpse-hunting season. You don't want to be searching your garage when it's 100 degrees. Schedule a date soon and use these timely tips to unearth and disperse your corpses.

Cardboard boxes – If you want to collect dust and bugs, keep the boxes. If not, let them go. Those big empty TV boxes and stack of Amazon boxes you thought you “might need someday” are taking up space that can easily be reclaimed. Empty boxes aren't hard to come by if you need some in the future. Slice and recycle.

Once the empties are discarded, sort through the cardboard boxes of stuff that came out of the house “to be dealt with later.” Most will qualify as corpses, defunct and ready to be discarded or donated. If there's something of value and use to you, resurrect it to a new home in a garage bin or closet in the house, depending on

where it's used.

Boxes of old papers and tax documents are also a haven for bugs and dust. Email a request for a paper retention guide to info@organizedbychoice.com and then fearlessly determine what is ready for shred and recycle. Transfer important paper archives to plastic file boxes.

Paint cans – Inspect each can. If it's bulging, the lid's puffed up, or it has a rubbery film on top of the paint, it's probably bad. For disposal information go to search.earth911.com.

To keep paint fresh and usable, store in an airtight container at room temperature. You can purchase containers at home improvement stores or on Amazon. If it's just for touch ups, a small container will do. Label it with the color, date and where the paint was used. Move it inside.

Camping Gear – If you were avid campers, but transitioned to an RV, Airbnb, or bought a little cabin in the woods, your camping gear is now defunct to you. Revive it, clean it up and pass it along to someone who will make new memories with it.

Exercise and Sports Equipment – What are you and your family currently using? Once you set those things aside, you're bound to find some corpses. Share the wealth. Bikes the kids grew out of. Exercise equipment that never passed the good intention stage. Cleats, bats and gloves that are gathering dust.

Tools and yard supplies – Have you put off projects because you can't find the tools you need? Too many corpses stifle production, cluttering your work and supply areas. Let go of the old power and hand tools you replaced long ago. Check to see if you have duplicate sets or items that can serve more than one purpose. Keep what is actively serving you and let go of the rest.

A great place to donate your usable garage items is The ReStore (www.HabitatFresno.org). They get a second chance for life in the hands of someone who needs them.

Strawwwberries!

(April 2015)

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.

What is your favorite sign of spring? Tulips and Crocus popping up out of the ground? All the beautiful trees blossoming? The wildflowers on the side of the road? April showers? Although I love the signs of spring I just mentioned, there is one thing I look forward to in spring and that is the strawberry stands going up in the strawberry fields. When we see them, we know it is strawberry season.

According to a list of 25 low carb fruits, strawberries are second to lowest, only behind watermelon (believe it or not). Strawberries have 6.5g of carbs per half cup sliced serving and watermelon has 5.5g. Strawberries have lots of vitamins and minerals, so eat up.

Strawberries can be fixed so many different ways, and always good. There is strawberry pie or "pizza," strawberry shortcake – those of you that went to the Crab Feed, how about that shortcake we had for dessert? (Ollie told me the cake part was muffins). There are strawberry waffles, and last, but by no means least, strawberry jam.

My neice Vicki's late Grandma Henderson made strawberry freezer jam and I was the benefactor of a jar or two from time to time. Delicious! I understand great niece Lauren has been moaning the fact that she misses Grandma's jam. Well dear, now is the time to learn how to make it and continue your Grandma's tradition. I went through my Mom's recipe cards and found a recipe (not sure if it is the same one Grandma Henderson made, but it will work). So in memory of Grandma Henderson here is my Mom's recipe:

Quick No-Cook Fresh Fruit Jam



- 2 qts. Ripe Strawberries**
- ¼ C Lemon Juice**
- 1 pkg. (2 oz) Jam and Jelly Pectin**
- 1 C Karo Light Corn Syrup**
- 4½ C Sugar**

Fully crush fruit. It should measure 3¼ C. In a 4 qt. bowl stir together the fruit and lemon juice. Slowly add pectin, stirring vigorously. Set aside 30 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add corn syrup, mix well. Gradually stir in sugar until dissolved. Ladle into clean ½ pt. jars or freezer containers leaving ½" headspace. Cover tightly. Jams in use should be kept in refrigerator up to three weeks or stored in freezer for up to one year. Makes seven containers. This recipe can be used with peaches or nectarines – using 2½ pounds ripe fruit in the place of the strawberries.

We get a newsletter here in the park I live and there is usually a recipe someone has donated. I guess someone was thinking along the same lines I was because in the April newsletter the following recipe was in it. I haven't made it, but it sounds good.

Special Strawberry Salad

- ¾ C sugar**
 - 1 8 oz. pkg. Cream Cheese – room temp.**
 - 1 C Chopped Nuts**
 - 2 Bananas – sliced**
 - 1 Large Can Crushed Pineapple – drained**
 - 1 10 oz. Frozen or Fresh Strawberries**
 - 1 Large Carton Cool Whip**
- If fresh strawberries are used, clean and slice and set aside. Mix sugar and cream cheese with electric mixer. Fold in nuts, drained pineapple, strawberries and Cool Whip. Refrigerate until ready to serve.

If you want to make a strawberry pizza, you really don't have to have a pizza pan. If you don't have a pizza pan you can use anything you have on hand. The last one I made, I used a deep dish

glass pie plate, but you can use anything. Use your ingenuity and your imagination. If you want to impress company coming, make it in a spring form pan and when ready to serve, put it on a pretty cake plate and pipe some whipping cream around the bottom.

I used a pie crust recipe, using butter and adding a little sugar, but here again you can use your favorite crust. I went on line to see what was used, and believe me, just about anything can be used. There were recipes using Bisquick, sugar cookie recipe, or even one recipe used a package of ready to bake sugar cookies. But the one I like the best was the one used for Republican Dessert.

Strawberry Pizza

- 1 C Flour**
- 1 Stick Butter-softened**
- ½ C Chopped Nuts (optional)**
- 2 T Powdered Sugar (optional)**

Mix together like pie dough. Press into pan with fingers and bake 10 minutes in 350 oven. Let

cool before putting on second layer.

Second Layer:

- 1 Pkg. (8 oz) Cream Cheese – softened**

½ C Powdered Sugar

2 C Sliced Strawberries

In a mixing bowl, beat cream cheese and powdered sugar until smooth. Spread on cooled crust. Arrange sliced berries on top.

Top Layer:

1 C Sugar

¼ C Cornstarch

2 C Crushed Strawberries

In a large saucepan, combine sugar, cornstarch and crushed berries. Bring to boil, cook and stir for 2 minutes or until thickened. Cool slightly. Spoon over strawberries. Refrigerate until ready to serve.

Well, that does it for this month. I still like to hear from you about the things you've made from the recipes here, or just to get your comments. Call me at the office, or e-mail me at the paper. But most of all thanks for reading.

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Say you saw it in the *Independent*

Senior Report

Excitement Builds for Flatlander's Day

By *Melanie Williams*

Every May, as the warmth of spring settles over the Central Valley, excitement builds in the weeks leading up to the Flatlander's Day Parade in the Madera Ranchos. Flatlander's Day is Saturday, May 17.

It's a day of celebration and community spirit with lots of fun activities. The Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce is sponsoring the event with support from the Southeast Madera County business owners. The parade will feature a colorful array of floats created by local businesses, schools and community organizations. Each float will tell its own unique story, contributing to the festive atmosphere that defines the event. In fact, many local people will be participating in the parade itself, proudly representing their schools, team sports and community clubs.

Local volunteers, event organizers, and community leaders spend months behind the scenes organizing everything from the parade route to the activities that follow. Volunteers help with ensuring that everything runs smoothly on the day of the event. One of the keys to the parade's success is community involvement. Last year, our own Ranchos/Hills Senior Center member, Jan Williams, was driving his baby blue Jaguar drop head coup convertible, escorting the parade's Grand Marshall.

In addition to the parade itself, the day will also feature food vendors and craft booths. It's the perfect opportunity to grab a bite to eat, shop for local goods, or just relax with family and friends while soaking in the atmosphere. You won't want

to miss out on this cherished community event.

The Monthly Sale at the Ranchos/Hills Senior Center is on Saturday, May 3, from 8 a.m. to noon. We had a great response from the community at our Home and Garden Festival in April and many people came to enjoy the beautiful outdoor weather and sunshine. We had a variety of craft items and vendors this year.

The Senior Center appreciated the volunteer support of the Boy Scout Troop 118 for their participation in set-



Ranchos/Hills Center member Jan Williams in his baby blue Jaguar drop head coup convertible that shuttled last year's parade Grand Marshal.

ting up, breaking down, helping vendors and volunteers during the festival. We had many wonderful donations for our silent auction and gift baskets. Thank you to all the Ranchos community businesses for your generous donations to the silent auction to support our local Senior Center. Local seniors are invited to come and join us for the May Day Potluck and Outdoor Game Night at the Ranchos/Hills Senior Center on Thursday, May 8 at 6 p.m. We have planned a great night of good food and outdoor games, including Ping Pong and Corn Hole. If you are interested, please call 559-645-4864 for more information.

The May Day Potluck is a great opportunity for seniors to get to know other local seniors and have a night of

Please see **SENIORS** on P. 12

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A portrait of a man wearing a light-colored cowboy hat and a light blue button-down shirt. He has his arms crossed and is standing in front of a background of green trees.

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The Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce would love to see you at our next meeting on Wednesday, May 14 at 6 p.m., 37167 Ave. 12 Suite 5C in the Maywood Center. Call 645-4001 for more info.

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Golden Valley Chamber

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Parade Day: Saturday, May 17, 2025

Group ☐ Individual ☐ Business ☐

Group or Business Name _____

Individual Entry or Responsible Person's Name _____

Phone: _____

Address: _____

Theme of Entry: _____

Will youngsters walk with the entry? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Approx. number of participants_____ Approx. length_____ ft.

Entry Category (select ONE most closely suiting your entry)

☐ Horses (Single) ☐ Horses (Group) Explain:

☐ Band/Music Name: _____

□ Floats Name: _____

☐ Children's Group's Name: _____

□ Dance Group's Name: _____

☐ Single Entry (Children) Name: _____

☐ Single Entry (Adult) Name: _____

☐ Vehicle Type: _____

☐ Novelty Name: _____

☐ Additional information:

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

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

Signature: _____ Date: _____

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

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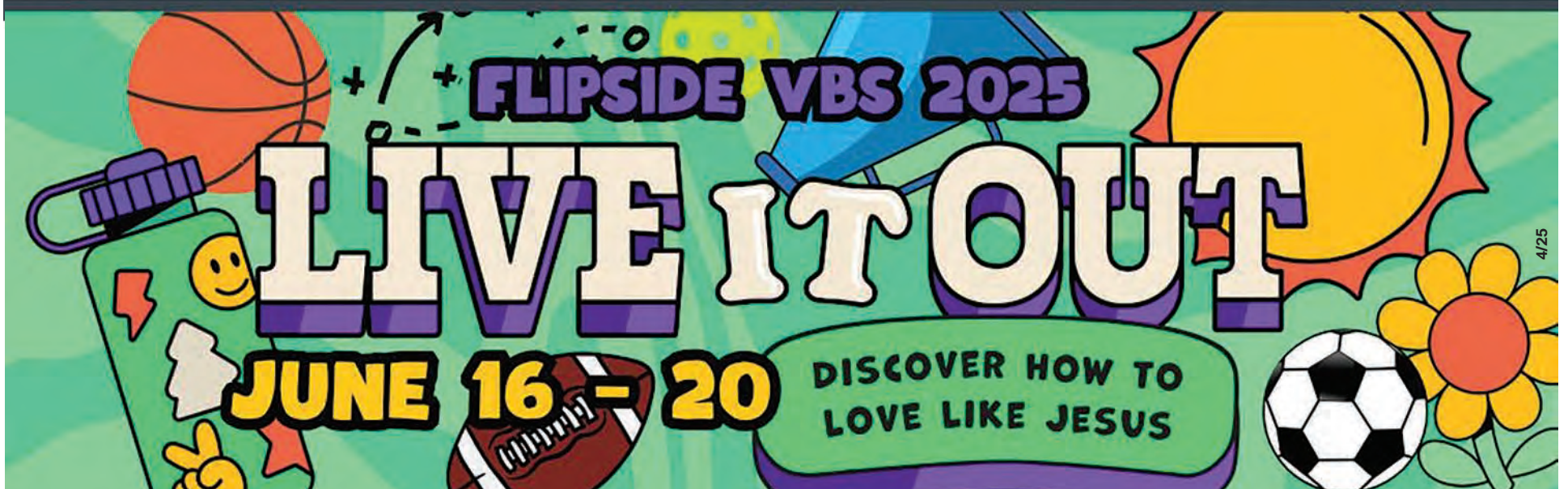
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SENIORS cont. from P. 9

good food and fun activities. Terry Killingsworth is leading our members of the appropriately named Ranchos/Hills Basket Cases in designing and weaving Indian pine needle baskets. There is still time to join the other "Basket Cases" and learn beginning basket weaving techniques together. We meet on the last Tuesday of each month. More class meetings might be added to the calendar in the future. Terry is also willing to meet with people individually for help with technique and information about supplies. She is very generous with her time and talent to support us with the basket weaving class. Our next classes are Tuesday, April 29 and Tuesday, May 27 from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. at the Senior Center.

Odd Fellows Breakfast is on Sunday, May 18 from 7:30 a.m. to 11 a.m. They support many local charities in Madera County with this min-

istry.

Brown Bag Day is Wednesday, May 21. Pick up your Brown Bag at the Ranchos/Hills Senior Center from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Participants must register with the Madera County Food Bank before picking up a Brown Bag. The Senior Center has applications for Brown Bag Day at the front desk.

If you are new to the Senior Center, please come by and pick up our monthly calendar filled with information about each activity and event. The Ranchos/Hills Senior Center will be closed for the observance of Memorial Day on Monday, May 26.

Happy Memorial Day from the members of the Ranchos/Hills Senior Center.

May is Mental Health Awareness Month: "Vulnerability sounds like truth and feels like courage. Truth and courage aren't always comfortable, but they're never weakness." — Brene Brown



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SEMCU speaks

By Verlaine Elinburg

Bridging Gaps & Building Futures: Ranchos Library Expands Resources for Home-schooling in the Community

In our tight-knit community, the library has always been more than a place to borrow books; it's been a hub for growth, connection and opportunity. As we evolve to meet the diverse needs of our residents, we at SEMCU – in collaboration with the Ranchos Library – are excited that the library is creating a new program. It is a home study curriculum for those who are eager to learn empowerment through education and it is called Help Us Create a Homeschool Hideaway at the Ranchos Library. There is a QR Code below that allows you to fill out a short survey that will help the library fine-tune the program.

The APP will explain the Home-school Hideaway at the Ranchos Library program by gathering information for the program. The goal of the program is to find a way to provide access to curriculum materials, physical resources and additional materials that will enhance the homeschool experience and increase accessibility for all of Southeast Madera County. This will be a collection that remains at the library with dedicated space, allowing the students to learn and grow. Information collected in the survey will help curate the wants of the community into one space, allowing us to work together to develop just what is needed to support homeschool.

The home study curriculum is designed for students Pre-K/TK through 12, seeking flexible learning solutions. Whether you're a busy parent, someone returning to education, or simply curious to expand your knowledge, this program offers a pathway to personal development.

When a community comes together, it can achieve much by simply spreading the word. Your support can make all the difference. Together, we can create a more inclusive and enriched community. Visit the Library today to learn more or to offer your support. Let's turn the page to a brighter future for everyone.

SEMCU has always helped the community with its many needs. SEMCU has donated visual equipment to the library for projections, Zoom presentations and meetings. For the Library's new Home-school project, SEMCU will always be there to volunteer its support.

Along with others, SEMCU is a non-profit organization that represents the interests of the residents, property owners and businesses in Southeastern Madera County. Its concerns, among other issues, are our community, safety, water, traffic, schools, future parks and energy. We invite community members to join SEMCU as board members to help shape the Southeast Madera County area and help make a difference for our families and youngsters. Together, we can build a stronger, more vibrant community. SEMCU meets once per month for about an hour at the Madera Ranchos Library at 37398 Berkshire Dr. in the Ranchos, or you may join us online to virtually participate. To join online, go to www.semcu.org for a link and simple instructions. Or if you prefer, you can call in on your cellphone at 669-900-6833 then enter the ID# 83632424343 followed with the access code 85422. Our next meeting is on Tuesday, May 20 at 6 p.m. at the Ranchos Library. Make your voice heard.

SEMCU is "By the Community for the Community"

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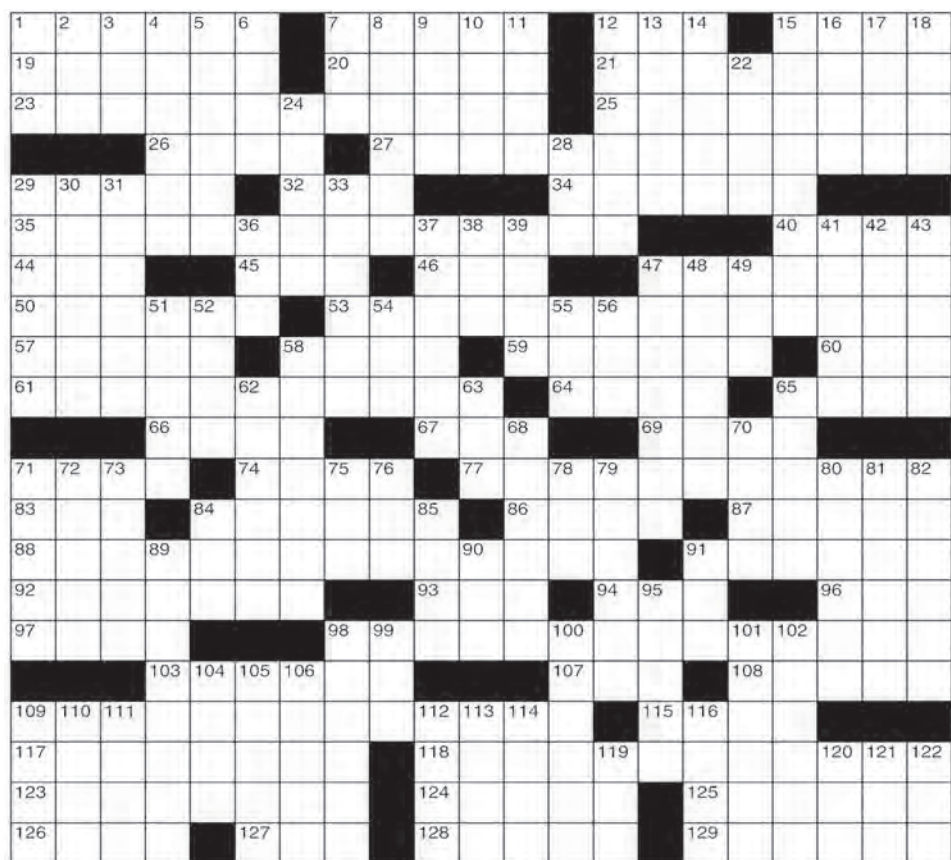
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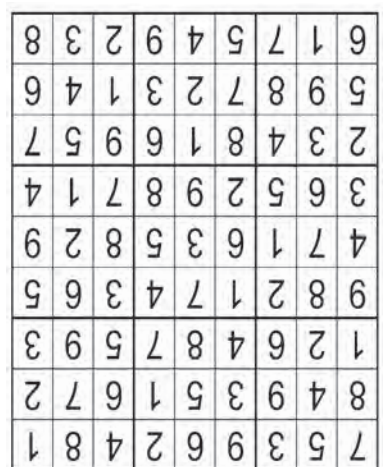
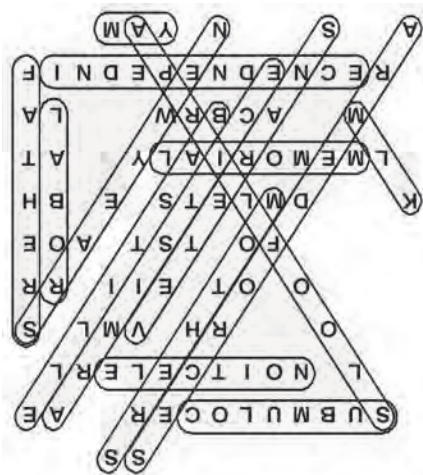
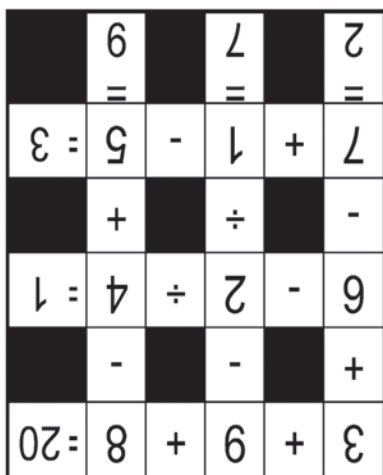
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—Super Crossword—



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ANSWERS



- | | | | | | |
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Firewood for sale - Seasoned Almond firewood. Round or split. Call **259-7122** or **645-5523.**

Gutter Services

The Gutter Doctor specializing in both continuous and standard rain gutters. General Contractor. Repair Maintenance. 26 years working in the area. Call **559-908-0759.**

Housecleaning

Over 40 yrs of experience - References available - Lupe's House Cleaning, residential, one-time service, move-ins/move-outs, windows, construction clean up. **LupePrado25@yahoo.com.** Call either of our **LOCAL numbers: 559-710-0692** or **650-771-2915.**

Property Clean Up

Property clean up, landscape maintenance and tree trimming - **FREE ESTIMATES.** Professional and reliable. **Call Eric at 559-903-3757.**

Recyclables Pick Up

KEEP IT LOCAL - FREE RECYCLING PICKUP - AmericanMade Direct/Kids4recycling offers free pickup of newspaper, shredded paper, all household plastic, glass, aluminum and tin cans (containers **DON'T** need to be CRV). Metal haul away and cleanups available also! 80% return back to community! **Call Dianna at 559-999-6832.**

Tractor/Trenching Services

BOBCAT WORK - DRILLING POST-HOLES - Trees - Trenching - Clean Up. **TRACTOR WORK** Discing - Rototilling - Mowing - Scraping - Stump Grinding. **Call John at 908-1066.**

Window Cleaning Services

Most windows start at \$5 and up -- inside/out - Screen, track, sills. Remove hard water stains on home windows, shower doors and car windows. Cobweb removal too. Fully insured. **Call Nick at 285-1723.**
Free estimates.

• Spring planting supplies are on sale now in home-improvement stores, and here is a handy and fun twine keeper that you can make with your kids using two repurposed clay flowerpots with drain holes. Choose a size that can easily fit a ball of twine or thin rope. Set the ball inside and invert one pot on top of the other, threading the line through the drain hole of the top pot. Secure with tape or even hot glue. Pull twine through the hole, and the ball doesn't get tangled up.

• "If you have a poster that has been rolled up and you want to hang it up, try rolling it the opposite way overnight. When you unroll it, there will be less bumps and the edges won't curl so bad." -- R.L. in Idaho

• The best way to cool canned and bottled drinks down fast is in a mix of ice and water. The water is a better conductor of the cool. Then make your ice last longer and stay colder by sprinkling a little salt on the ice/water mixture.

• "After too many mornings of rushing to find uniform pieces before a game, we decided to get smart. Now, sports uniforms get hung up with all accessories in the coat closet right after washing. They're ready as soon as it's game night -- no looking under beds or in the back of overstuffed teenager closets!" -- P.P. in Texas

• "To hold all my daughter's bobby pins, I mounted a plastic cup with double-stick tape right to her vanity mirror. I used to vacuum them up all the time, but now that she has a place to put them, it's better." -- L.E. in New Hampshire



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

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TO ADVERTISE call 559-645-0634

The idea of **GO FIGURE** is to arrive at the figures given at the bottom and right-hand columns of the diagram by following the arithmetic signs in the order they are given (that is, from left to right and top to bottom). Use only the numbers below the diagram to complete its blank squares and use each of the nine numbers only once.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

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	+		+		= 20
+		-		-	
	-		÷		= 1
-		÷		+	
	+		-	5	= 3
=		=		=	
2		7		9	

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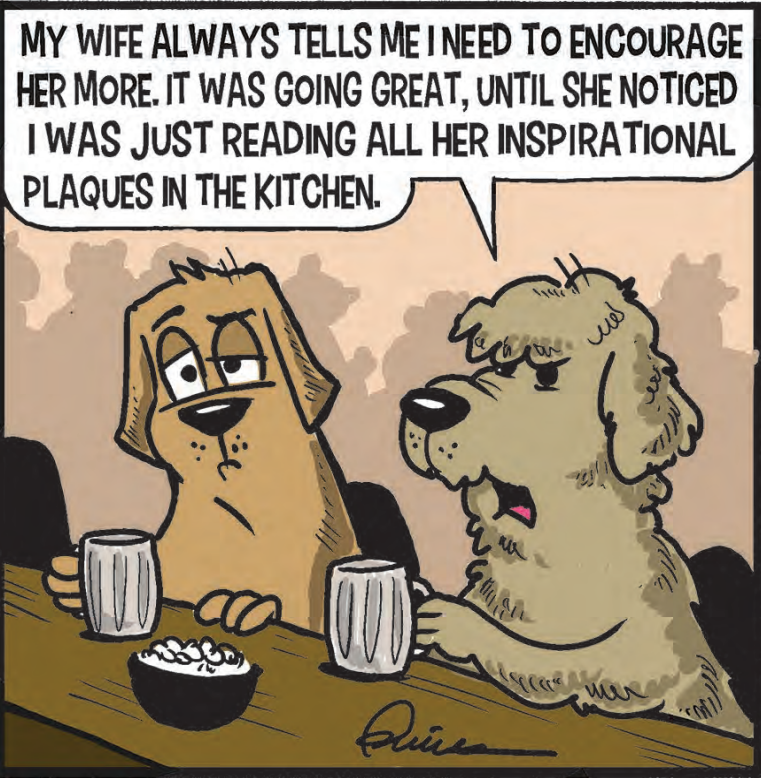


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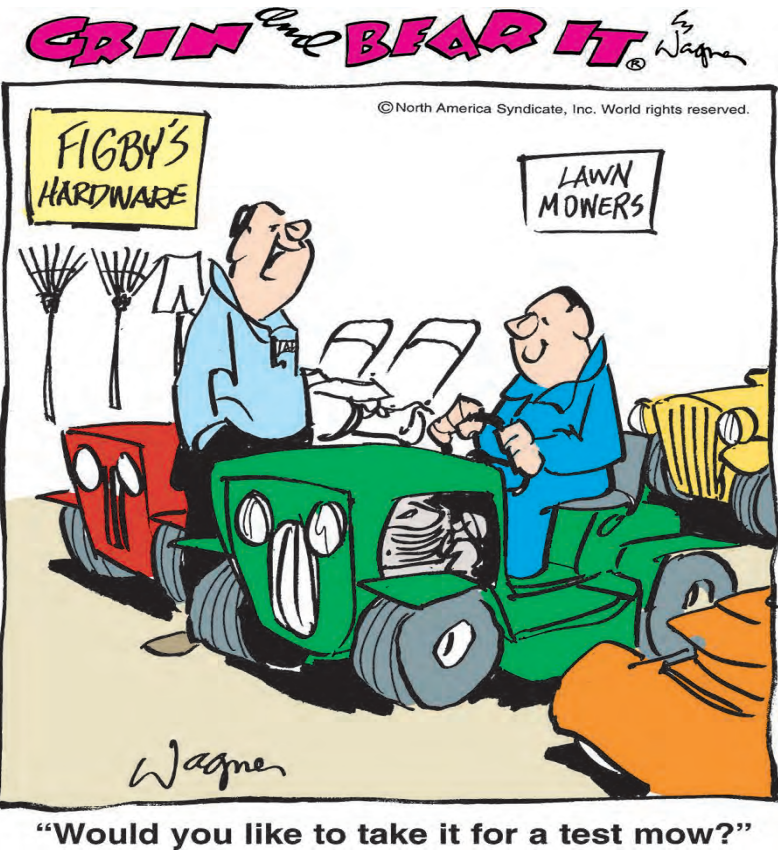
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Just Like Cats & Dogs by Dave T. Phipps





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ARIES (March 21 to April 19) A seemingly stalled romantic situation could benefit from your reassurance that you want this relationship to work. And if you do, use a tad more of your irresistible Arian charm!

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20) Going to new places and meeting new people appeals to both the Taurean's romantic and practical side. After all, you never can tell where these new contacts will take you, right?

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20) A career-changing opportunity that didn't work out when you first considered it could come up again. But this time, remember that you have more to offer and act accordingly.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22) There could be some tensions in relationships -- domestic or workaday. But a calm approach that doesn't raise anger levels and a frank discussion will soon resolve the problem.

LEO (July 23 to August 22) It's a good idea to begin preparing for a career change that you've been thinking about for a while. Start to sharpen your skills and expand your background to be ready when it calls.

VIRGO (August 23 to September 22) Bless the VIRGO skepticism that has kept you from falling into traps that others seem to rush into. But you might want to give a new possibility the benefit of the doubt, at least on a trial basis.

LIBRA (September 23 to October 22) Traveling- and career-related energy is strong in your aspect. Perhaps your job will take you to someplace exotic, or you might be setting up meetings with potential clients or employers. Whatever it is, good luck!

SCORPIO (October 23 to November 21) Someone might use deception to try to push you into making a decision that you're not fully comfortable with. But your keen SCORPIO senses should keep you alert to any such attempt.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22 to December 21) Romance dominates this week when Cupid shafts the Archer for a change. Positive things are also happening in the workplace. Expect important news to arrive by the week's end.

CAPRICORN (December 22 to January 19) Anyone trying to bully the Sea Goat -- whether it involves a personal or professional matter -- will learn a painful lesson. Others will also benefit from the Goat's strong example.

AQUARIUS (January 20 to February 18) Congratulations! With things going the way they are, you should be able to spare some time and take a break from your hectic schedule for some well-earned fun and games.

PISCES (February 19 to March 20) Your sharp Piscean intuition should be able to uncover the true agendas of those who might be trying to catch the Fish in one of their schemes.

Born this Week

Your flair for innovative art and design keeps you at least a step ahead of most everyone else. You're a visionary!

FUN PAGES

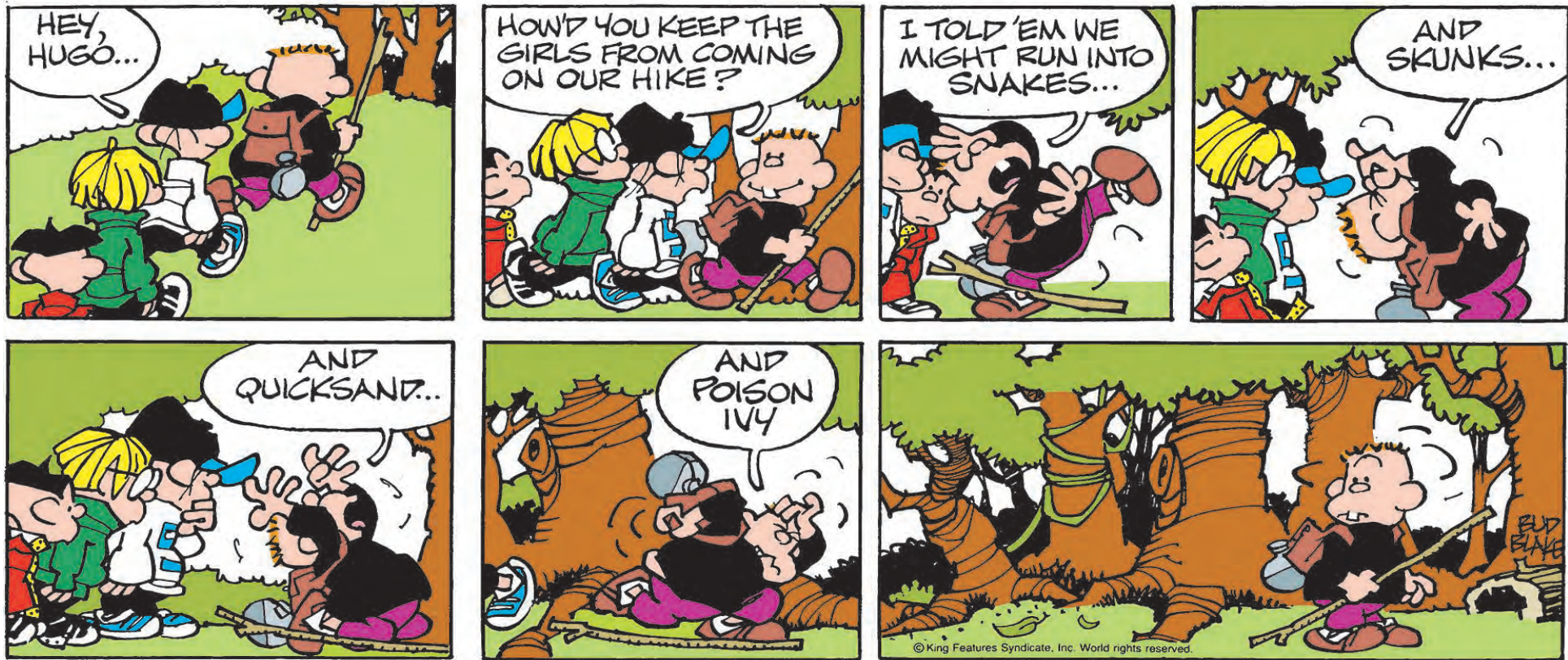
Kids' Maze



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TIGER

by BUD BLAKE



POPEYE

"THE ONLY COLOR THAT EXISTED AT THAT TIME IN THE PRINT INDUSTRY- THE MOVIES WERE IN BLACK AND WHITE, THE WORLD WAS IN BLACK AND WHITE, BUT COMICS WERE BLASTING IN COLOR. AND SUNDAY MORNINGS, I WAS ALIVE...."

— HY EISMAN IN AN INTERVIEW FOR THE YIDDISH BOOK CENTER'S WEXLER ORAL HISTORY PROJECT, 2022

IN MEMORY OF
HY EISMAN
MARCH 27, 1927-
MARCH 27, 2025

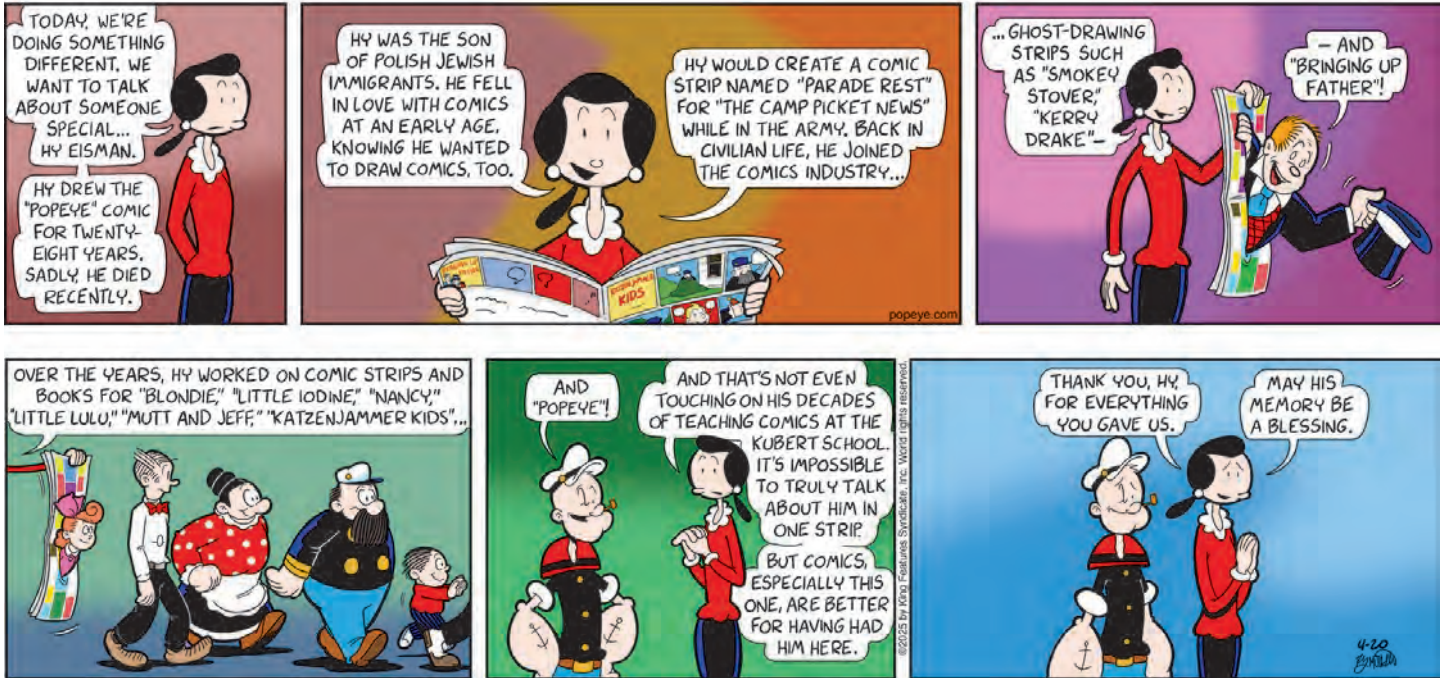
TRIVIA TEST

By Fifi Rodriguez

- MOVIES:** Which animated movie was the first to be nominated for a Best Picture Academy Award?
- GEOGRAPHY:** Interior and exterior film shots of Alnwick Castle in England are featured in the first two movies of
- TELEVISION:** What was the last name of the family in the sitcom "Married ... With Children"?
- LITERATURE:** For which category is the Caldecott Medal awarded?
- GENERAL KNOWLEDGE:** Also known as a double eagle, what is the golf term for scoring three under par on a hole?
- ANATOMY:** What is the protein that carries oxygen in the blood?
- U.S. PRESIDENTS:** Which president was the first to name a woman as a Cabinet member?
- ANIMAL KINGDOM:** What is a baby toad called?
- FOOD & DRINK:** Which fast-food chain's secret ingredient is 11 herbs and spices?
- ASTRONOMY:** How many moons does Mars have?
- Two: Phobos and Deimos.
- Kentucky Fried Chicken.
- Tadpole.
- Perkins as Labor Secretary.
- Franklin D. Roosevelt named Frances
- Hemoglobin.
- Albatross.
- Outstanding children's picture books.
- Bundy.
- "Harry Potter."
- "Beauty and the Beast."

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Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps



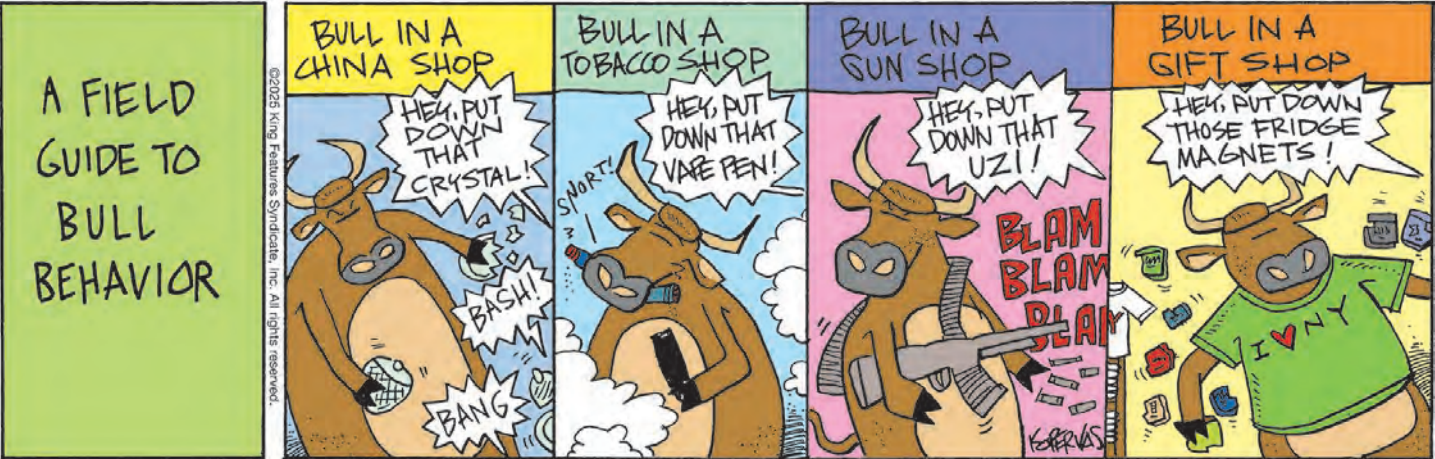
The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas



HOCUS-FOCUS BY HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels. Differences: 1. Eyes are different. 2. Hat is thinner. 3. Label is larger. 4. Door is not as wide. 5. Name on door is lower. 6. Tie is thinner.

SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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

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The Independent
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MAGIC MAZE — DAY: OBSERVANCES

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

Find the listed words in the diagram. They run in all directions forward, backward, up, down and diagonally. Unlisted clue hint: CELEBRATION OF OLD GLORY

- | | | | |
|--------------|--------------|----------|------------|
| April Fools' | Columbus | Labor | Mother's |
| Armed Forces | Election | May | New Year's |
| Armistice | Father's | Memorial | Veterans |
| Bastille | Independence | MLK | |

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by phone: 669-900-6833 - & enter meeting ID#: 836 3242 4343, then access code 854 221

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