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Volume 22 Issue 4 2026

The Official Publication of Southeastern Madera County

50¢

## California's next Governor?



**a one-on-one with Steve Hilton**  
By Peter Pinedo

### *In This Issue*

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California Republican gubernatorial candidate Steve Hilton sounds off on Governor Newsom's leadership, calling him an "absolute failure on every front."

Steve Hilton, a legal immigrant and political newcomer running as a Republican for governor of California, said the "absolute failure on every front" by current Gov. Gavin Newsom and Democrats means the GOP has a real shot at pulling off an upset in the Golden State.

Though California has long since been written off by many as a progressive stronghold, the most recent polling indicates Hilton may be right. On Wednesday, Berkeley's Institute of Governmental Studies released a poll showing Hilton leading California voter preferences at 17 percent. Another Republican, Riverside Sheriff Chad Bianco, follows at 16 percent. Both Republicans are ahead of the two top Democratic names, Rep. Eric Swalwell, D-Calif., and former Rep. Katie Porter, who are each at 13 percent.

"I know people look at California and assume that it's going to be Democrat forever. It's a deep blue state, but people here are sick of it. There's a revolution brewing in California," Hilton said. "This is our year."

Hilton, an entrepreneur who immigrated to California from the United Kingdom in 2014, credits Newsom and years of one-party Democratic rule with voters waking up to the "complete disaster" unfolding in California.

"It's not just the visible signs of failure that you see when you look at California," Hilton said. "You know the homelessness crisis, by far the worst in the country. The crime that's out of control, the smash-and-grab rates, the videos of that — those things are visible. But if you actually look under the hood, as it were, of daily life in California, it is an absolute failure on every front, it's not just that we're doing badly in California under Gavin Newsom, we are the worst-performing state."

He said that California's sanctuary policies are a perfect illustration of this.

"People are infuriated when they see illegal immigrants in our state getting rewarded and getting away with crime and getting away with things that just regular Californians wouldn't be able to get away with," he said. "It's an insult to regular, hardworking California taxpayers when they see people who are here illegally getting things for free that they have to pay for."

The same Berkeley poll indicated that 42 percent of California voters consider a candidate's ability to "aggressively fight Trump administration policies" important in selecting their preferred candidate. Additionally, 28 percent believe a candidate holding progressive views is important.

California saw some

Please see **HILTON** on P. 16

## California Roads, Highways Rank Worst

Ry Katy Grimes

A new study finds California has the second worst roads in America, ahead only by Alaska. I can validate this having just traveled 600 miles by car in California on Interstate 5, Highway 101, State Route 152, and many local boulevards, thoroughfares and roads in between.

Californians pay the highest gas taxes in the country, yet are forced to drive over deep potholes, deteriorating highways, crumbling shoulders, bumpy surfaces, damaged roads, patchwork fixes, uneven pavement, and deeply cracked asphalt.

California's government is clearly broken — but so are our expensive tires, along with our bank accounts.

"California's highway system now ranks 49th out of 50 states in overall condition and cost-effectiveness, Reason Foundation's 29th Annual Highway Report finds," Baruch Feigenbaum, senior managing director of transportation policy at Reason Foundation and lead author of the report detailed in the Orange County Register. "Only Alaska, which faces harsh winters and many geographic challenges that drive up costs, ranks worse overall."

California has no excuse. Transportation funds have been "borrowed" for decades by the governor and legislature and reassigned to the General Fund, rather than used to repair and improve the state's highways, roads and infrastructure.

"Given the money California generates from

drivers, it should have a better road and highway system," Feigenbaum said.

"The Legislative Analyst's Office found that state sources of transportation funding, primarily fuel taxes and vehicle fees, brought in over \$14 billion in 2023-24. Yet, California's urban arterial road pavement condition is 50th, the worst in the nation. Not much better, the state's urban Interstate pavement condition ranks 48th out of 50 states. California also ranks 47th in rural Interstate pavement condition and 39th in rural arterial road condition."

Since 2018, we've been told that Californians spend \$843 annually on vehicle repairs caused by poor road conditions. It's as if no one wants to report the real cost in 2026. Whatever it is, it is higher than the national average.

"Tire blowouts, rim damage, and suspension wear are common expenses for drivers navigating damaged streets and highways," Rate My Roads reported in 2025.

According to the California Legislative Analyst's Office, the 2025-2026 Budget includes roughly \$31 Billion for transportation and one billion for transportation-related programs in 2025-26, including for the California Department of Transportation, California State Transportation Agency, local streets and roads, California Highway Patrol, Department of Motor Vehicles, and High-Speed Rail Authority.

This is less funding than the 2024-25 transportation budget of \$35.3 billion.

### Can You Help?



## Brittany Robbins

Our world was shattered on Aug. 30, 2024 when our daughter Brittany was taken from us in a tragic incident at Avenue 12 and Riverstone SW Blvd. As we navigate the upcoming court case, we're seeking support from our community. We invite you to write a Community Impact Statement, sharing how Brittany's passing has affected you, your family and the community. Your statement can highlight the emotional, psychological, or social impacts you've experienced. Please email your statement to shanna\_robbins@yahoo.com or mail it to 36815 Ave. 12, Madera, CA 93636.

Your words will bring us comfort during this difficult time. – Shanna, John and Michaela

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MADERA COUNTY SHERIFF



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Letters

Dear Editor

As a Ranchos resident of nearly 40 years, I have had the privilege of being deeply rooted in our community — from attending local schools and earning collegiate scholarships, to participating in traditional events and supporting local businesses. For half of those years, I have been a loyal reader of The Independent, and today I write in respectful opposition to Mr. Schiebelhut's recent letter regarding this publication's content and point of view.

Contrary to Mr. Schiebelhut, I extend my sincere gratitude to The Independent and request that it retain its current standards and practices indefinitely. I have

never found this paper's subject matter to be propagandistic or exclusionary. This newspaper provides an invaluable service that has kept our community connected and well-informed by covering both local events and broader issues with a fair and right-of-center perspective.

In a media landscape dominated by liberal viewpoints, it is especially appreciated to have a paper that continues to emphasize faith, family, fellowship, and freedom — the very values that make up this community. I eagerly await each new issue in my mailbox.

Sincerely,

Kira Martin  
Madera Ranchos

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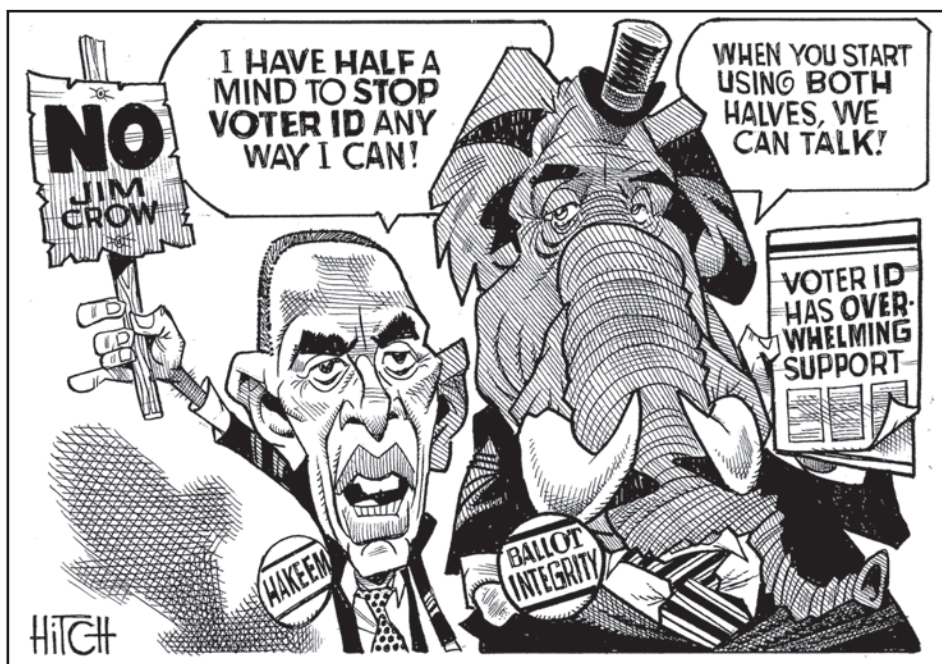
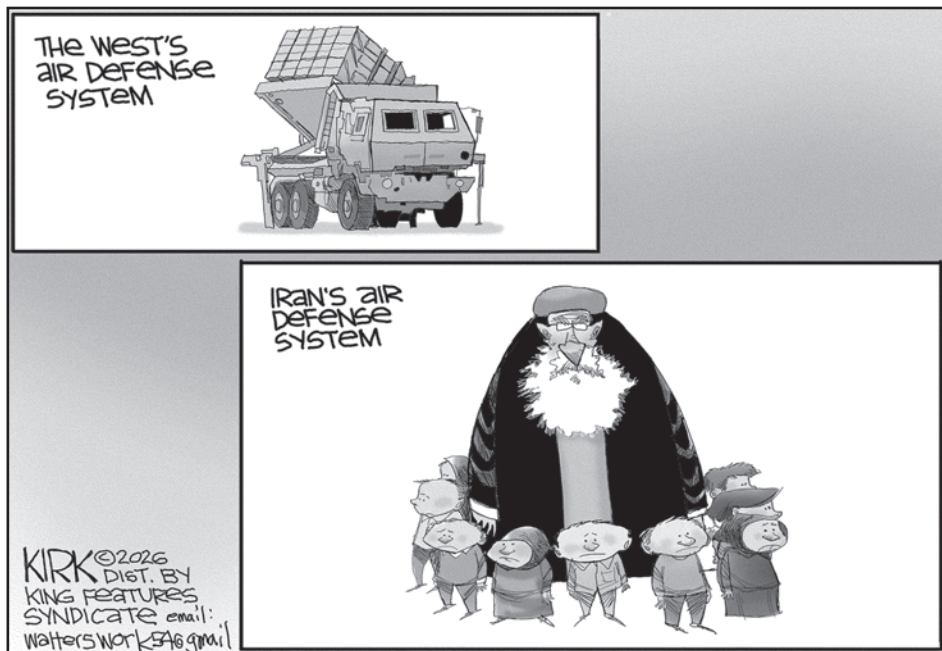
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## Guest Editorial

# How Swalwell's Implosion Changes the Race for Governor

By Jon Fleischman

If you thought political cancellations could move fast, Congressman Eric Swalwell just set a new standard.

If you tuned out California politics for one Friday afternoon, you missed the destruction of a gubernatorial campaign. In a matter of hours, Swalwell went from one of the Democrats in the race for governor, to a politically toxic candidate fighting for survival. That is how fast this happened.

The collapse began when the San Francisco Chronicle reported allegations from a former staffer who said she had sexual encounters with Swalwell while he was her boss and alleged he twice sexually assaulted her when she was too intoxicated to consent. Swalwell flatly denied the allegations. Since then, several other former staffers have come forward with allegations.

Politically, the damage was im-

mediate.

His two campaign co-chairs, Democratic Reps. Jimmy Gomez and Adam Gray, stepped away and called on him to leave the race. House Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries called on Swalwell to drop out and demanded a swift House investigation. Nancy Pelosi said the matter should

be handled outside a gubernatorial campaign. US Sen. Adam Schiff pulled his support. US Sen. Ruben Gallego did the same. Dozens of other Democratic politicians followed suit. The California Teachers Association dropped its endorsement. SEIU

California suspended campaign activity on his behalf.

*That is not just bad press.*

*That is a political collapse.*

Other Democrats piled on. Katie Porter, Tom Steyer, Tony Thurmond, Betty Yee and Matt Mahan all called on Swalwell to get out. Republicans Steve Hilton and Chad Bianco did the same.

By day's end, this was no longer a story about damage control. It was a public stampede away from a candidate.

Swalwell refused to quit. In a video statement, he called the allegations "flat false" and vowed to "fight them with everything that I have." He also apologized to his wife for unspecified "mistakes" in his past and said he would spend the weekend with family and friends before providing an update "soon." His lawyer later said he intended to stay in the race.

On Monday, April 13, Swalwell was formally gone.

Campaigns do not survive this kind of institutional abandonment, especially in a Democratic contest where support from elected officials,

*Democrats are now under pressure to consolidate. Republicans are under pressure to do the same. And everyone with money, institutional muscle and strategic patience, is suddenly looking at a very different map. One candidate's fall just changed the odds for everybody.*

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

Please see EDITORIAL on P. 12

# High School with Ashtrays

I was sitting in a meeting the other day watching two women have a show-down that triggered a core memory. They were dancing around the issue, taking polite little jabs at each other's position while the rest of us tried very hard to pretend it wasn't personal and was actually related to the issue we were supposed to be resolving. Somewhere in the middle of it, I started expecting the bell to ring and wondered if I had finished my algebra homework. I spent the rest of the jousting match (whoops, I mean meeting), pondering the other parallels a professional office has to an American high school.

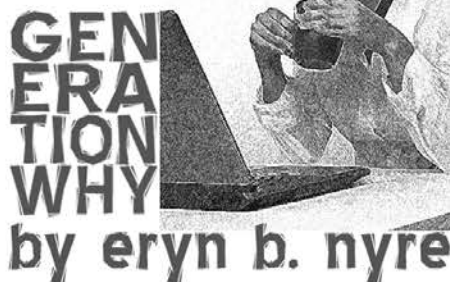
I'd like to say it's subtle that no one is passing notes or getting sent to the principal's office, but I'd be lying because there are always side chats in the Teams meeting, and if HR isn't the adult equivalent of the principal's office, I don't know what is. The more I thought about it, the harder it was to unsee.

There's always a version of a group project. One person does most of the work, a few people contribute just enough to stay out

of trouble and at least one person is suspiciously unavailable until it's time to turn everything in. You tell yourself it's different because now there are job titles and performance expectations, but somehow the same dynamic keeps showing up in slightly more professional clothing. Only slightly, though, because I've seen teenagers look a heck of a lot more put together than some of my colleagues.

There are meetings that feel less like collaboration and more like chaotic discussions where everyone is trying to say anything to get credit for participation without actually committing to anything. Like that one teacher who always wanted to be a law professor – but washed out of law school – so he turns every English lesson into a senate debate. A room full of people trying to sound smart without actually saying anything useful.

And then there's email, the bane of my existence. No matter how detailed and organized the email is, inevitably someone will stop after the first couple of sentences and chaos will ensue. They send a response asking questions



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

that were already answered, and suddenly what was clear isn't anymore. At that point, you're no longer sure if you're working or just watching a very slow-moving social experiment. That doesn't even cover the people who don't read it at all. Don't get me started on the people who reply all and bombard your inbox with "thanks."

Tone becomes its own language. You re-read what you wrote three times

to make sure it doesn't sound too direct, too passive, or like you're about to assign someone detention. You add a "just checking in" or a "circling back" to soften the blow,

even when everyone knows exactly what you're asking. We like to think that once we enter the workforce, things become more structured. More rational. More mature. But most of it doesn't go away.

You just get paid to deal with it.

Deadlines replace due dates. Meetings replace class discussions. Performance reviews replace report cards. But the underlying patterns, the way people show up, avoid things, step in, or quietly hope someone else will, those don't change nearly as much as we expect them to.

Most of us have, at some point, avoided something we didn't want to deal with, waited a little too long to respond, or hoped someone else would step in and take care of something we weren't entirely sure how to handle.

Those of us who were "type A" in high school are often still that person when we step into the office. The one who notices something isn't getting done. The one who follows up. The one who fills in the gaps, not because it's

Please see **GEN WHY** on P. 9

*We may not have lockers anymore, but we haven't completely outgrown the dynamics ... we've just learned how to schedule them.*

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**HELP!**

Do you ever have those discoveries that make you think, "If only I had known about this sooner!" One that comes to mind is the pre-emergent, Preen.

Even though we had just a third of an acre, springtime in the Ranchos meant lots of weeds. My husband preferred spraying weed killer after they came up. My preference was to not see them green or brown, so I took the hoe to

them. But imagine, something that kept them from growing in the first place? Enter Preen — the work smarter, not harder answer by preventing the weed seeds from germinating. So helpful!

In my almost 20 years of professional organizing, I'm still meeting people unaware of our industry. For some of you, the knowledge might be like the Preen lightbulb I experienced. Yes, there are people all over the world coming alongside clients who feel overwhelmed by their clutter. Some are stuck not knowing where to start. Some just need an ounce of accountability to move forward. Here are a few examples of the challenges encountered,

and how professional organizers help.

1. *One client* grew up with household staff attending to the family's every need. Now on her own, she was admittedly clueless about how to maintain an orderly environment. Another never learned organizing skills because the home in which she grew up was in continuous chaos.

2. *It's the job* of a professional organizer to not only establish order but also transfer skills as she walks through the process with the client. One client says she often thinks, "What would Brenda say?" when organizing on her own.

Physical limitations contribute to the challenge of organizing. One client kept apologizing for the mess we were working on. To me the fact that she was legally blind was reason enough. Designating specific homes for things made it much more manageable for her going forward.

When upper cabinets and shelves are not accessible due to a person being short of stature or in a wheelchair, it's challenging to fit everything needed where it can be reached. A professional organizer helps clients determine what's used most often and how to use organizing containers and products so they're easily accessible.

3. *Many times* I hear, "I would have stopped long ago if you weren't here." Keeping our clients on task is a huge

part of what we do. Whether it's decision fatigue, fear of letting go, or boredom with the task — it's our job to help clients bring it to completion.

Not everyone has family nearby when it's time to downsize for a move. With the onsite help of an organizer, adult children of seniors can rest assured that parents will arrive at their new residence with an appropriately pared down version of their belongings. Relationships can be spared when that task isn't one that parent and child would do well together.

Professional organizers are not a "one size fits all." It's important to find a good fit. If you're looking for someone with years of experience, a member of the National Association of Productivity and Organizing Professionals (NAPO), Board Certified, an organizing teacher and coach, patient and understanding with clients, but determined to help you reach your goals — I'm your girl. If you need someone that works independently (I work alongside my clients) or has a team to lift heavy boxes or do packed garages, I recommend you check out these websites: [napo.net](http://napo.net) or [findmyorganizer.com](http://findmyorganizer.com).

If you're stuck with the thought "I should be able to do this myself," consider the many other things we seek help with — the guidance of a physical trainer, or even having door dash deliver meals. Consider what it's costing you to NOT do it. Then, reach out for help.

*For more info, contact Organized By Choice at 559-871-3314 or email them at [info@organizedbychoice.com](mailto:info@organizedbychoice.com).*

*If you're stuck with the thought "I should be able to do this myself," consider the many other things we seek help with — the guidance of a physical trainer, or even having door dash deliver meals. Consider what it's costing you to NOT do it. Then, reach out for help.*



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**Say you saw it in the Independent**

Senior Report

# Flatlander's and Festival on the way

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. The Flatlander's Day Parade and Fair is Saturday, May 16 and it's a day of celebration and community spirit with lots of fun activities.

The festive Flatlander's Fair will open at 7:30 a.m., featuring a variety of local food and craft vendors and the Flatlander's Day Parade will begin at 10 a.m. on Road 36, in front of Liberty High School. 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

Ranchos Hills Seniors

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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.

A new date is scheduled for the 31st Home and Garden Festival at the Ranchos/Hills Senior Center. On Saturday, May 2, the Senior Center is hosting its Home and Garden Festival from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Plants will be available in the Scout Garden, along with some good advice about how to plant a beautiful spring garden.

The Treasure House and Boutique will be open at the festival this year and there will be delicious baked goods available and the Senior Center is selling fundraising tickets for a Mother's Day Gift Basket. Our favorite vendors are setting up booths to sell various specialty craft items, including suncatchers and uniquely crafted wood art for the house and yard. Here are also locally made handcrafted jewelry and leather goods.

Come on over and check it out on Saturday, May 2 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The Ranchos/Hills Seniors invites any senior or caretaker of seniors to attend the presentation about Alzheimer's

Dementia on May 5 at 12 p.m. A guest speaker will speak about the 10 warning signs that may lead to dementia in older adults. This presentation is open to anyone in the community who wishes to attend.

Happy Mother's Day on May 10th.

Local seniors are invited to come and join us for the May Day Potluck and Game Night at the Ranchos/Hills Senior Center on Thursday, May 14 at 6 p.m. We have planned a great night of good food, indoor and outdoor games, including Ping Pong, Corn Hole and Card Games. The May Day Potluck is a great opportunity for seniors to get to know other local seniors and have a night of good food and fun activities. If you are interested, please call 559-645-4864 for more information.

The Senior Center has weekly activities and events every month for seniors. Weekly activities include the Senior Exercise Classes every Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 11 a.m. Card and Tables Games every Thursday at 12:15 p.m. and there's the Senior Hot Lunch Program available Monday through Fri-

Please see SENIORS on P. 9

Calling all Community Members  
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**GEN WHY** cont. from P. 6

technically our responsibility, but because it needs to be done and we know how to do it. There's a certain comfort in that role. It feels productive. Reliable. Necessary. It also starts to look a lot like doing your entire group project by yourself.

Because work isn't always distributed by role or responsibility. Sometimes it's distributed by who is willing to let something sit unfinished and who isn't. And some of us are very bad at letting things sit. So, we step in. We follow up. We fix, adjust and remind. We smooth over the rough edges so everything keeps moving forward. From the outside, it looks like things are working. The deadlines are met. The projects get completed. Everything looks fine. But underneath that, the same familiar dy-

namics are still there. Just quieter, hidden behind meeting invites and carefully worded emails.

We are also often the ones promoted to manager, which can often feel a little more like hall monitor than the leader and support system you're hoping to be. It turns out the hardest part of working in an office isn't the work itself. It's navigating all the very human ways people show up to it.

And every now and then, in the middle of a meeting that could have been an email, or an email that turns into five more emails, or a project that feels suspiciously familiar, it's hard not to notice the resemblance.

We may not have lockers anymore, but we haven't completely outgrown the dynamics.

We've just learned how to schedule them.

**SENIORS** cont. from P. 8

day at 11:30 a.m.

Molly Ohanian teaches a Chair Yoga Class every Thursday at 10 a.m. and Terry Killingsworth is leading the members of Ranchos/Hills Basket Cases in designing and weaving Indian pine needle baskets. There is still time to join the other "Basket Cases" to learn beginning basket weaving techniques together. The next classes are Tuesday, May 5 and Tuesday, May 26 from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. at the Senior Center.

Odd Fellows Breakfast is on Sunday, May 17 from 7:30 a.m. to 11 a.m. They support many local charities in Madera County with this ministry.

Brown Bag Day is Wednesday, May

20. Pick up your Brown Bag at the Ranchos/Hills Senior Center from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. A representative from Kaiser Permanente will be present for questions about their Medicare Health plans at the Brown Bag Day on Wednesday, May 20.

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 25.

*Happy Mother's Day and Happy Memorial Day from the members of the Ranchos/Hills Senior Center.*

Mother's Day Quote: "A mother loves you first. Then, forever." -- Hallmark

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1 Corinthians 11:15

"Francoise" by Pablo Picasso (1946)



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New Chamber member Randel Mathias of Storelocal Storage @ Tesoro Viejo, right, welcomes Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce President Mike Fursman to their grand opening at Storelocal Storage at 3655 Promenade Ave. in Southeast Madera County, just east of Highway 41 and near Avenue 15.

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Parade Day: Saturday, May 16, 2026

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 Ardatth to Ave. 12 in front of Liberty High

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

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

Bring, fax or mail this form by **May 6** to: **Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce**  
37167 Ave. 12 Ste. 5C • Madera, CA 93636 • Fax 645-4002 • Call 645-4001

Flatlanders is sponsored by the Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce.

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**The Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce would love to see you at our next meeting on Wednesday, May 13 at 6 p.m., 37167 Ave. 12 Suite 5C in the Maywood Center. Call 645-4001 for more information.**

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# SEE YOU SUNDAY!

EDITORIAL cont. from P. 5

organized labor, and donor networks is oxygen. The bigger story now is what Swalwell's implosion does to the governor's race.

Until this political earthquake, he had been one of the top-tier candidates, running in the mix with Porter and Steyer while Republicans Steve Hilton and Chad Bianco fought for conservative support. Now Swalwell's voters are up for grabs.

In California's top-two "jungle primary" system, two Democrats can emerge from the June election if Republican votes are split badly enough. With Swalwell gone or crippled, Democrats now have even more incentive to sort themselves around one or two contenders. This has happened before. In 2016, then-Attorney General Kamala Harris and Congresswoman Loretta Sanchez, both Democrats, emerged from California's June top-two election for the U.S. Senate, shutting Republicans out of the general election that Harris went on to win.

**That matters far beyond the governor's race.**

A Republican standard-bearer in a statewide general election helps drive turnout, sharpen party contrast and boost down-ticket candidates for Congress, the Legislature and local office. It can also affect the political environment around statewide ballot measures. But Republicans are not the only ones who understand that math.

Big public employee unions would also prefer a clean Democrat-versus-Republican general election in deep-blue California. They know how to game the system. In 2024, Adam

Schiff spent millions boosting Republican Steve Garvey in the U.S. Senate race because he wanted the matchup he preferred. The irony here is that the same kind of maneuver could happen again. If labor or allied Democratic interests decide Tom Steyer is the safer bet, they could try to boost a Republican just enough to help knock Porter out of the top two. Or vice versa.

That is why Swalwell's collapse matters far beyond Eric Swalwell.

Swalwell's campaign did not just implode. It changed the race. Some will move to Porter. Some will move to Steyer. Some will trickle to the other Democrats struggling to be relevant. Some may drift into the undecided column. But they are not disappearing.

The most immediate beneficiaries are Porter and Steyer, both polling in the low double digits and within striking distance of a top-two finish. Swalwell's collapse gives them a chance to consolidate Democratic voters looking for a viable alternative. And that creates a problem for Republicans.

If the GOP does not consolidate behind one candidate, the chances of Republicans being shut out of the general election become real.

Democrats are now under pressure to consolidate. Republicans are under pressure to do the same. And everyone with money, institutional muscle and strategic patience, is suddenly looking at a very different map.

One candidate's fall just changed the odds for everybody.

*Jon Fleischman is a longtime California political strategist. His writing can be found on his Substack at [www.SoDoesItMatter.com](http://www.SoDoesItMatter.com).*

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## GO FIGURE!

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.

	-		×		= 10			
+		+		+				
	+		÷		= 7			
-		-		÷				
	+		÷		= 8			
=		=		=				
4		1		3				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

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## Kiwanis Korner

# 40 Years of Recognition for Area Kiwanis

By Sally Rowden

We had a very exciting celebration a few weeks ago. Our 40 years of service to our communities were recognized by a

community of folks at a reception held at Liberty High School. County Supervisor Jordan Wamhoff and Field Representative Emily Tymn from Assemblymember David Tangipa's Office, here in our 8th

## SEMCU speaks

By Igal Treibatch

### "JUST A REMINDER"

Don't let the wet weather fool you! Just to be clear, we're expecting a strong "El Nino" with hot dry and potentially record-breaking summer events and widespread above-normal temperatures. We may be experiencing heatwaves and triple-digit temperatures often exceeding 100-110 degrees with unexpected thunderstorms. So, for a rural and a farming community, water is going to be of ut-



most importance. Keep hydrated and stay informed with forecasting services such as The National Weather Service that can help get you ready and make sure the elderly, youngsters and animals are protected. In the past, some residents of Southeast Madera experienced water failures in summers such as the coming one. Being prepared is essential, reserves of water and extra shade are essential.

With summer heat, we can expect more vulnerability to exposure and potential fires. It has not been long since we all experienced the results of devastating fires and we should be ready. Fire defensible space means clearing the area around your property of any combustible materials on roofs, chimneys, gutters and overgrown trees. And vegetation around the house and mowing a clear ring around the property should be a standard summer chore.

If you are experiencing domestic

well or water quality problems, contact "Self-Help Enterprises." Qualified people may have a water tank installed or have bottled water delivered, or have work done on a new or existing well. For your needs, call or email:

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SEMCU is a nonprofit organization that represents the interests of the residents, property owners and businesses in Southeastern Madera County. Its concerns, among other issues, are our com-

munity, safety, water, traffic, schools, future parks and energy. We invite our community to join and help make a difference for our families and youngsters. We invite community members to join SEMCU as board members to help shape the Southeast Madera County area. Together we can build a stronger, more vibrant community.

SEMCU meets once per month online for about an hour, you may virtually participate. To join online, go to [www.semcu.org](http://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 19, at 6 p.m. Make your voice heard!

**SEMCU is "By the community,  
for the community"**

Assembly District, each presented us with a Certification of Recognition.

Along with this evening of recognition, we acknowledged a very deserving and long, long-time member, Mona Diaz. It was a great tribute by members, friends, family, school officials and public officials. The food by Liberty Café was extremely tasty and the festive strawberry topped white cake by Ollia Ridge was scrumptious. This was an evening, I'm sure Mona will not forget.

Our kindergarteners from Stone Creek Elementary school visited Storyland on Thursday, April 9. In a partnership with Storyland, we provided the entrance fee costs for each of the kindergarten children. Our club member, Jolene Mason, visited Storyland with the kindergarten children, teachers and parent chaperones. Jolene shared that all enjoyed and the new Paul's Pirate Ship was very well received.

We have several events we will be involved in for the next few months, starting with the Torch of Excellence whereby the Kiwanis Division 5 Clubs honor community college athletics. We then have our local John Minney - Liberty High School Senior Scholarships, the Hope for America Awards at Ranchos Middle School and the Character Counts Awards at Sierra View, Stone Creek and Webster Elementary Schools. As



And it just wouldn't be a celebration without your grandkids to cheer you on. From left, we have Indi, Harvey, Charles, Mona, Alisa and Logan.

Local Kiwanis President Sally Rowden, left, receives a certificate from Madera County Supervisor Jordan Wamhoff in recognition of the club's 40 years of Kiwanis service to the community.



Longstanding member Mona Diaz, left, was also recognized for her contributions to Kiwanis and the community with a certificate from Emily Tymn, a representative from Assemblyman David Tangipa's office.



The Madera Ranchos Kiwanis Club members showed up in force for the 40th year recognition ceremony. Among the attendees were Charles Diaz, Ollia Ridge, Jolene Mason, Sally Rowden, Andrea Pille, Katie Harr, Marie Cameron, Richard Wayne, Mona Diaz, Emily Tymn (Guest), Suzy Ruhn, Ram Gurnani, Kevin Hatch and Casey Diaz.

these events unfold, we will be sharing all outcomes in our future Ranchos Independent news articles.

Of course, we will be at Flatlander's Parade and Vendor Faire on May 16. It is always a great local community event. Come on out and join the fun. If you want to take part in the parade and/or get a vendor's spot, contact Ollia Ridge at the Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce as they are the sponsor of this event. That contact number is 559-645-4001. You can also go to the Chamber Office at 37167 Avenue 12 - Suite 5 - Madera, CA 93636. The office is open Monday through Wednesday from 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

We will be at the Ranchos/Seniors Garden Festival on May 2. We have a beautiful Mother's Day Raffle Basket for your viewing, along with the opportunity to purchase tickets to become the owner. Tickets are \$1 each or \$5 for six tickets. Find this event at the Ranchos/Hills Seniors Center - 37330 Berkshire Dr. - Madera, CA 93636. Lots of vendors and treasures to investigate so come on out.

I want to share a quote from Margaret Mead - "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." Thank you, Kiwanis, for letting me have this experience.



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**HILTON** cont. from P. 2

of the most dramatic expressions of anti-Trump sentiment in his first year, with anti-ICE riots breaking out throughout the summer.

However, even with this, there is concern among Democratic strategists that the liberal and progressive vote will be split among the high number of Democratic candidates running for governor. Due to California's unique top-two "jungle primary" system, a fractured Democratic vote could mean Hilton and Bianco are the only two candidates to advance to the November general election.

Hilton is confident that Republicans can capitalize on dissatisfaction with Newsom's tenure as governor to propel them to victory. He referred to the anti-ICE agitators as a "very loud, well-organized, often well-funded minority of activists."

"It's activists, political activists on the far left who are pushing this," he said. "Most regular people believe that our laws should be properly enforced. That's the majority position, I would say, even in California."

Regarding his stance on the issue, Hilton said that as governor, he would "not accept California sanctuary state law," and would "very clearly and strongly work with the federal administration to enforce the law."

"I have absolutely no doubt that standing up for the enforcement of the law and saying very clearly that, of course, this is

America, and we want to welcome immigrants to our country, but it has to be done the right way, and if you break our laws to come here, then you shouldn't be here. And it's as simple as that," he explained.

Being from a family of immigrants himself — his parents fled to the U.K. from communist Hungary — Hilton said he is solidly "pro-immigration," while noting, "... but it's got to be controlled."

"I hear all the time that we should be offering a pathway to citizenship for illegal immigrants. There is a pathway of citizenship. It's called legal immigration. I just took it. It is available," he said.

Hilton concluded that while some conservatives may have written off California, he believes the gubernatorial race has an impact on the entire country.

"So many of the terrible policies that are infecting the rest of the country, they all started here. The gender extremism, the climate extremism. All this nonsense, it started here in California," he said. "So, if we beat them here, then we are doing something very important for the whole country. That's why I think it's a race that actually really matters a lot."

Fox News Digital reached out to Newsom's office and the Swalwell and Porter campaigns for comment.

*This article originally appeared on Fox News Digital.*

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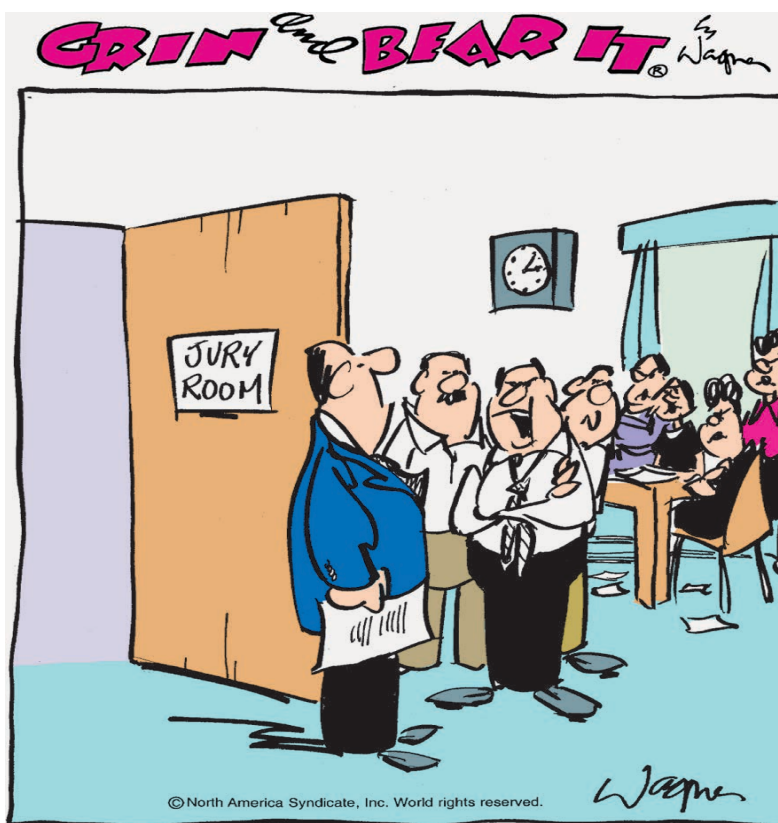
Just Like Cats & Dogs

by Dave T. Phipps



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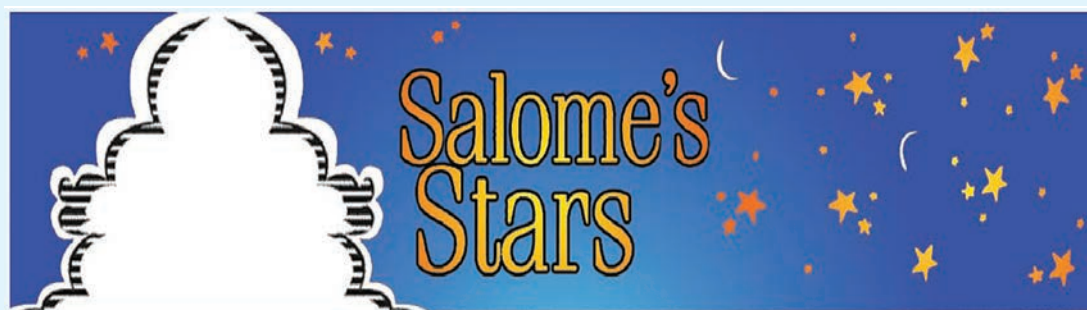
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**ARIES** (March 21 to April 19) Impatience is still somewhat of a problem. But a sign of progress should soothe the anxious ARIES heart. Meanwhile, invest some of the waiting time in preparing for a change ahead.

**TAURUS** (April 20 to May 20) Bovines tend to excel at solving problems, not creating them. But you risk doing just this if you're slow to respond to a timely situation. If necessary, seek advice from someone you trust.

**GEMINI** (May 21 to June 20) The GEMINI Twin might need to do more than a routine check of both a job-linked and home-based situation. Dig deeper for more data on both fronts to avoid unwanted surprises later.

**CANCER** (June 21 to July 22) Moon Children who are facing an important workplace decision are being encouraged to use their perceptiveness to see through any attempt to win them over with a supercharge of fawning and flattery.

**LEO** (July 23 to August 22) Good news catapults LEONs and LEONas into reconsidering a deferred decision. But time has moved on, and it's a good idea to recheck your plans and make adjustments where necessary.

**VIRGO** (August 23 to September 22) The week favors relationships, both personal and professional. Take the time to look for and immediately repair any vulnerable areas that were caused by unresolved misunderstandings.

**LIBRA** (September 23 to October 22) A friend's problems bring out your protective instincts. Be careful to keep a balance between meeting the obligations of friendship without being overwhelmed by them.

**SCORPIO** (October 23 to November 21) The temptation to take an extreme position on an issue is strong, but moderation is favored both in personal and professional dealings. Move toward finding areas of agreement.

**SAGITTARIUS** (November 22 to December 21) Getting another boss or teacher? Try to see the person behind the image. It will help you adjust more easily to the changes that new authority figures inevitably bring.

**CAPRICORN** (December 22 to January 19) Much as you might dislike the idea, keep an open mind about using the assistance of a third party to help resolve problems that threaten to unravel an important agreement.

**AQUARIUS** (January 20 to February 18) Music helps restore the Aquarian's spiritual energies this week. Take someone you care about to a concert of your musical choice. Also, expect news about a workplace matter.

**PISCES** (February 19 to March 20) A challenge that seems easy enough at first could take an unexpected turn that might test your resolve. Decide if you should stay with it or if it's better to move in another direction.

**Born this Week**

*You can be strong when standing up for justice, both for yourself and for others. In the right setting, this skill can be revolutionary.*

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# Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps



# The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



# Out on a Limb

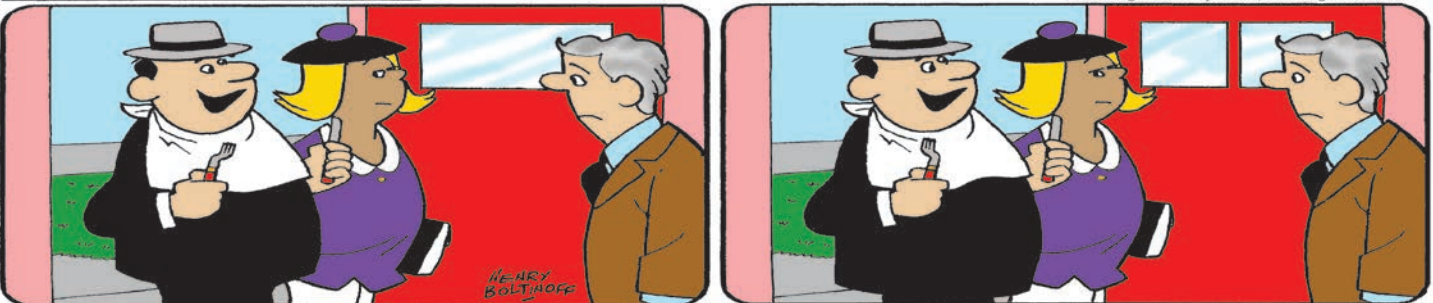
by Gary Kopervas



# HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF

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Find at least six differences in details between panels.  
 Differences: 1. Purse is moved. 2. Fork is longer. 3. Napkin is reversed. 4. Doorway opening is not as wide. 5. Window in door is different. 6. Jacket is longer.

# SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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

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# MAGIC MAZE

WORDS ASSOCIATED WITH VOLCANOES

ROLHEBXUROLIEBY  
 VSQNKDHEBYWTROL  
 JGEBCYOWUMRPNKI  
 GNDBZRXRAVSNQOM  
 KIOTGEUGMCICAYW  
 USQILPMSPANNALJ  
 HFRETARCTLNEVEC  
 AYGUEPSNVDUTATS  
 EARTHQUAKESLLNQ  
 PESNMOKRBRJOHEF  
 ECBHMZYXEAVMUVT

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

- Ash
- Basalt
- Caldera
- Crater
- Crust
- Dormant
- Earthquakes
- Eruption
- Magma
- Mantle
- Molten
- Mountain
- Rupture
- Steam
- Vent

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# FUN PAGES

# SEMUCU

**south east madera county united**

A non-profit organization dedicated to improving life in South East Madera County

**Coming in May:**  
**2026 FLATLANDERS**  
**PARADE & FAIR**

**SATURDAY, MAY 16TH ♦ 10AM**  
**ROAD 36 IN FRONT OF LIBERTY H.S.**  
**BRING YOUR CHAIRS, FRIENDS & FAMILY**

**Also: ENJOY the FOOD, MUSIC & CRAFTS AREA opening at 7:30 am**

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**GOLDEN VALLEY CHAMBER of COMMERCE**

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**SEMUCU meets on the 3rd Tuesday every month**  
**Our next meeting is in person on**  
**Tuesday, May 19<sup>th</sup> at 6 p.m.**

**Online: go to: [WWW.SEMCU.ORG](http://WWW.SEMCU.ORG) for the link**  
**by phone: 669-900-6833 - & enter meeting ID#: 836 3242 4343,**  
**then access code 854 221**

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