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Becerra Loses Ground to Hilton —



Too Little Too Late for Governor?

In This Issue

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By Zain Khan

Democratic gubernatorial hopeful Xavier Becerra has lost ground in a new California poll, giving Republican Steve Hilton a small boost as the race enters the final stretch toward November.

Becerra now has the support of 55 percent of likely voters, down from 61 percent in last month, according to a Berkeley Institute of Governmental Studies/Los Angeles Times poll.

Hilton, meanwhile, has edged up one point, from 36 percent to 37 percent, shrinking Becerra's once-commanding 25-point lead to 18 points. The poll was conducted Aug. 3-9 among 2,310 California voters considered likely to cast ballots in November.

Even with the drop, Becerra continues to hold a substantial advantage over Hilton with less than three months to go before the general election. The Democrat remains ahead across several of the state's biggest population centers, including Los Angeles County, San Diego County, the Bay Area and the Central Coast. Hilton has the advantage in more conservative regions, including the San Joaquin Valley and North Coast/Sierra, while Orange County and the Inland Empire remain much closer.

"An 18-point lead still makes Becerra the clear favorite, and the narrowing from 25 points looks more like normal movement than a competitive race," Matt Klink, a Republican strategist told the Post. "Hilton's path requires a major shift among independents, a sustained focus on affordability and public safety, depressed Democratic turnout, and a serious Becerra mistake."

The gubernatorial race was plagued by scandal, especially after allegations of sexual assault and rape involving former front-runner and Democratic hopeful Eric Swalwell came to light before the June primary. According to Klink, the best strategy Becerra has now is to keep a low profile.



"Becerra is playing hide and seek now, largely staying out of the public spotlight and avoiding anything even remotely controversial," he said. "If the above doesn't happen (all three together are a long shot), Becerra will win comfortably."

The former California attorney general is also dodging questions. Becerra abruptly walked away from reporters recently after refusing to answer repeated questions about his record overseeing migrant children. He has not made any substantial media appearances since winning the primary.

However, Becerra maintains a sizable advantage among voters who do not identify with either major party, leading Hilton 58 percent to 30 percent. He has the backing of 88 percent of Democrats, while Hilton is supported by 91 percent of Republicans.

The latest survey marks a notable change from the earlier polling.

In the May IGS survey, Becerra led a hypothetical matchup 52 percent to 31 percent among registered voters. Both candidates

have since gained support, but Becerra's standing among likely voters has slipped since the July PPIC survey even as Hilton has made a modest gain.

Becerra's personal ratings have also improved from May, with 49 percent viewing him favorably and 43 percent unfavorably. Hilton is underwater, with 39 percent favorable and 50 percent unfavorable.

Still, the Republican has a steep climb ahead in a state where Democrats have a major built-in advantage.

"After the unsettled and chaotic primary, this is shaping up to be a fairly standard California general election, where Democrats enjoy a comfortable edge statewide," said Eric Schickler, a political science professor and IGS co-director. "Hilton would need to make major inroads among traditionally Democratic-leaning groups to make this a highly competitive race."

The poll comes as both candidates

Please see **TOO LATE?** on P. 13

Fresno Cop Arrested in Riverstone "Intent to Terrorize"



Fresno police officer Matthew Rodarte, 28, was arrested in Riverstone Sunday morning, Aug. 9, at 1:45 a.m. trying to force his way into the wrong house.

Madera County Sheriff Deputies were called to a home in the Riverstone Development of the Madera Ranchos in response to a call of an apparently drunken man attempting to force his way into the home. Sheriffs said the man had become angry for

being denied entry and subsequently tried to force his way in. Upon his arrest, Sheriff Deputies discovered that he was Matthew Rodarte, 28, a four-year veteran police officer for the City of Fresno. Upon arrest, Rodarte was charged with attempted burglary, dis-

orderly conduct and suspicion of "intent to terrorize."

Rodarte was arrested around 1:45 a.m. on Sunday morning, Aug. 9, after arriving at the wrong house, obviously under the influence of alcohol, where he became upset because the occupants would not let him enter. That was when he tried to force his way into the home. The home was located near Cathedral Court and Peters Road, just west of Rolling Hills in Riverstone.

Rodarte posted bail and was released about 2 p.m. Sunday.

Rodarte started as a cadet with the Fresno Police Department in 2020 and progressed to being a full officer in 2022. According to Fresno PD, he has been working patrol in Fresno's southeast district for about four years. Rodarte has been placed on administrative leave while the case is being investigated which is the usual protocol in cases such as this.

Animal Shelter Gets Signatures

The volunteer group for the voter's initiative measure to expand and improve the Madera County Animal Services facility and add an affordable, non-profit veterinary clinic for residents and their animals, delivered approximately 4,702 signatures in July to the Madera County Elections Dept for signature verification.

Measure founder DJ Becker said that the 4,702 signatures collected and turned in took months to achieve and was well over the required minimum of 3,750 for registration verification. "If the minimum requirement for valid signatures is met, the measure will then proceed to the ballot in November," Becker said.

Becker said Madera is making history with these efforts to improve the community and expand services for residents and their animals.

"We know the need in Madera for these animal services is just overwhelming," Becker said.

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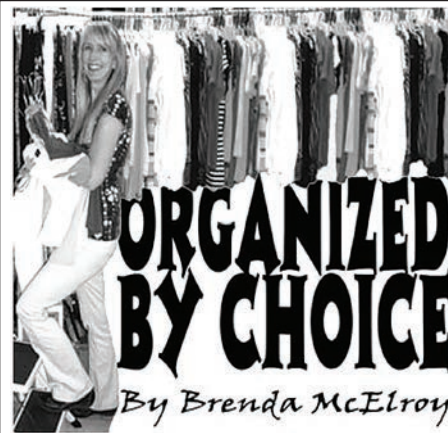


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Say you saw it in the Independent



If These Walls Could Talk

Approaching the abandoned farmhouse, I asked my husband for a piggyback ride. I had experienced chiggers one too many times in the tall Oklahoma grasses. He set me on the front porch, and I cracked open the door to the house built by my great-grandfather in the 1800s.

My mom recalls Sunday afternoon gatherings in this house with lots of cousins, food and laughter. Oh, to hear the conversations as the women washed and dried dishes, or the stories told to the children at bedtime. If only the walls could talk.

None of those stories were heard that day. What the house told us was that it was no longer a valued refuge, a place where people gathered for celebrations or comfort. It was dilapidated and contained misplaced things like tires and hubcaps.

The walls of our homes will never speak of the things they hear us say, but our homes do speak. When the family room furniture is covered with stuff, it's say-

ing, "Can't relax here — too much to do." When the home office has paperwork piled about, it's saying, "You're way behind. You'll never catch up." What's your house communicating to you, your family and others with whom you share it?

Don't hear what I'm "not saying." I'm not saying that a welcoming, peaceful and productive house must be model home status 24/7. Lots of homes are lively and active and they should look like someone lives there. Here are three ways to improve the messages your home is sending you.

Listen — Good listening requires focused thought. Schedule a date with your home so it has your undivided attention.

One on one — Just like you can't listen to everyone at once, you can't listen to your whole house at once. Reduce the overwhelm and choose one area in your home to focus on.

Ask questions — A good listener asks meaningful questions. "Why am I such a failure?" isn't helpful. Asking, "What is this area trying to teach me?" is productive.

A good place to start is where you enter your house — front door or garage entrance. Is it saying, "Welcome, come on in!" or is it suggesting you reroute since it's blocked with boxes, bags, shoes and pet supplies?

Ask, "What would make it

Please see **ORGANIZE** on P. 12



My great-grandparents' Oklahoma home built by my great-grandfather in the 1800s.

New Yoga Studio Serves Ranchos

The Madera Ranchos, Bonnadelle Ranchos, Rolling Hills, Riverstone and Tesoro Viejo communities now have a new destination for health, wellness and connection with the opening of Zen Den Holistic Power Yoga, a locally owned boutique yoga studio founded by Madera Ranchos resident Molly Ohanian.

Built around the philosophy "Come As You Are," Zen Den was created to provide an inclusive and welcoming environment where people of all ages, backgrounds and fitness levels can experience the benefits of yoga and mindful movement.

Molly brings more than 17 years of personal yoga practice and seven years of teaching experience to the studio. Her vision is to create a space where beginners feel comfortable taking their first class while experienced practitioners can con-

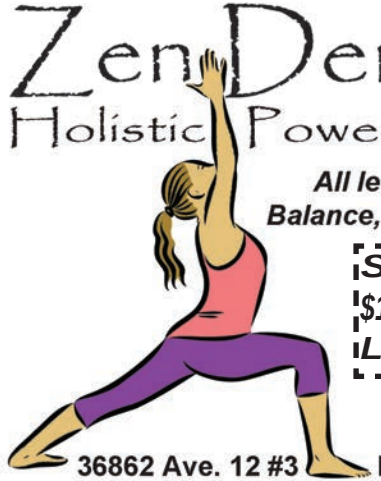
tinue to grow and deepen their practice.

"Yoga has the ability to meet people exactly where they are," said Ohanian. "My goal is to provide a space where everyone feels welcome, supported and empowered to take care of their physical, mental, and emotional well-being."

Located in the heart of the Madera Ranchos, Zen Den offers a diverse schedule of classes designed to serve a wide range of needs and abilities. Classes include Power Vinyasa, Fire & Flow, a mixture of calisthenics and Pilates, Flow & Restore, Zen Yin Yoga, Gentle Flow and Chair Flow sequenced for Seniors.

One of the studio's most popular community offerings is its Senior Chair Yoga program. These donation-based classes are

Please see **YOGA** on P. 12



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Guest Editorial

California: The Abortion State

By Katy Grimes

California beat Massachusetts to who is more ghoulish.

Massachusetts Governor Maura Healy just signed a new Massachusetts law allowing abortions at any time. Healy, a Democrat, signed the new law on Aug. 10, removing the state's 24-week abortion limit, allowing abortions at any point in pregnancy. Most of the mainstream media reported that the new law is "strengthening abortion protections."

Predictably, it's about Trump: "As the Trump Administration ramps up attacks on reproductive care and abortion access nationwide, Massachusetts must continue closing gaps in care so that women have full autonomy over the care they need, when and where they need it," said Senator Robyn Kennedy (D-Worcester), Senate sponsor of the bill. They never say *how* the "Trump Administration ramps up attacks on reproductive care and abortion access." Trump merely cut Planned Parenthood's taxpayer funding.

The Governor who shut down California's beaches and legendary tourist attractions, churches, bars and restaurants

as a response to the COVID pandemic, effectively killing off many businesses and the tourism industry, saw it fit to promote abortion tourism, inviting tourists to visit California and get an abortion if their own state has abortion restrictions. Gov. Gavin Newsom and the State Legislature offer taxpayer funds to help out-of-state residents obtain abortions.

They also legalized infanticide.

But California beat Massachusetts to who is more ghoulish.

Assembly Bill 2223 by Assemblywoman Buffy Wicks (D-Oakland), is an abortion bill from 2022 misleadingly labeled "Re-

productive health," which actually seeks/sought to legalize infanticide to expand the killing of infants past the moment of birth up to weeks after, the California Globe reported.

Gov. Newsom also authorized the creation of The California Future of Abortion Council in September 2021. The goal of the Council is to make California an Abortion Sanctuary State. "It is imperative that California take the lead, live up to its proclamation as a 'Reproductive Freedom State,' and be ready to serve anyone who seeks abortion services in the state." They released recommendations to "Protect, strengthen and expand abortion services in California," in their new report. "Reproductive Freedom" is "newspeak" for terminating a pregnancy. They anticipate abortions to increase in California from 46,000 to 1.4 million with taxpayer funded "abortion tourism."

The California Assembly and the Senate voted in 2022 to mandate all private and public health insurance plans cover abortions with no co-pays or deductibles under SB 245, by Sen. Lena Gonzalez (D-Long Beach), the California Globe reported. With at least 26 states considering a ban on abortions – or late term abortions – reports indicate that California could see a dramatic 3,000 percent increase of people traveling into California for abortions.

Katy Grimes is the Editor in Chief of the California Globe. This article originally appeared at www.californiaglobe.com.

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RONALD REAGAN
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Missing “The Mama”

This year marks 10 years since my mother passed away. Ten years. That number still feels impossible to me. I haven't seen Mama's face, heard her laugh, called her just to tell her something ridiculous, or been able to wrap my arms around her in all that time.

There is, of course, sadness in that. There always will be. Grief doesn't disappear just because the calendar keeps flipping pages. It does change, though. It's not that it gets easier or lighter, it just becomes a permanent part of everything you carry. Some days it sits quietly in the background, and some days it reaches out and taps you on the shoulder when you least expect it. But I don't want this piece to be about the hole my Mama left behind. I want it to be how extraordinarily lucky I was to have her in the first place.

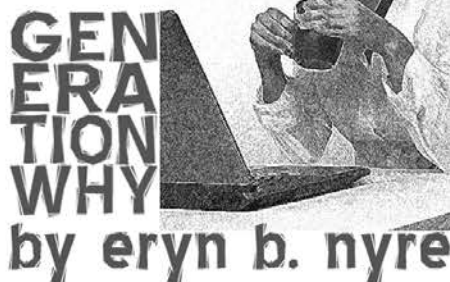
My mother didn't just occupy space in people's lives; she made them better.

She showed up for people. Consistently. Completely. Sometimes whether they asked her to or not. If someone she loved was celebrating, she celebrated with them like she had personally won the award, got the promotion, bought the house or had the baby. If someone was grieving, she sat with them in it. She just knew how to be there. She knew how to make people feel seen, even when she was carrying pain of her own.

When she was battling cancer, I know she was scared. She had to be. But all she ever showed us was her faith that God was going to get her through it. And even then, she worried about other people. I visited her in the hospital when her entire body was getting destroyed by the chemo and managed to pick up a nasty case of the flu. When she was released, her first instinct was to take care of me instead of herself. That was the Mama.

She had this enormous capacity for joy, too. Not the forced kind. Not the kind where someone insists everything is wonderful while the building is on fire. Her joy was genuine. She could be silly and whimsical, laughed easily and had a playfulness about her that made ordinary moments more fun.

That does not mean she was inca-



pable of driving me absolutely insane. In fact, no human being has ever been able to give me an eye twitch quite as efficiently as Mother, which is what I called her when she was being particularly “mother” about some technology problem I'd already walked her through at least 73 times. She would listen carefully while I explained, nod like the information had permanently imprinted itself on her brain and then call three

days later with the exact same problem. Now I realize it was just another reason to call her daughter.

And boundaries? Those were really more of a suggestion as far as she was concerned.

She would climb all the way into my business with the confidence of a woman who had once changed my diapers and therefore maintained a lifetime all-access pass. I could be a fully grown adult, living my own life in another state, and somehow she could still ask a question that transported me immediately back to being 16 years old and wanting to slam the bedroom door. She found joy in irritating me. Looking back, I would give almost anything to be annoyed by her one more time.

That is one of the tricks grief plays on you. The things that once made you sigh become the things you miss most. I don't just miss the profound moments or the holidays or the big conversations. I miss the interruptions. I miss the questions. I miss hearing my name said in that particular tone that meant she had an opinion about something I was doing and was absolutely going to share it.

But more than anything else, Mama had an extraordinary capacity for love and forgiveness. She believed

Please see **GEN WHY** on P. 13



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SAY YOU SAW IT ... IN THE INDEPENDENT

Senior Report

September Means “Back to School” for Local Community’s Children

By Melanie Williams

The summer months are coming to an end as Madera Ranchos students head back to school in anticipation of the 2026-2027 school year in the Golden Valley Unified School District. The Ranchos/Hills Senior Center members wish all students in the community a great school year.

We were blessed with cooler weather the last few weeks, so Ranchos/Hills Senior Center members have enjoyed evening potlucks, fun group games, exercise classes, Indian basket weaving and senior lunches on the patio at the Senior Center. Our September calendar is filled with Autumn events and weekly activities.

The Alzheimer’s Association is giving a presentation to inform seniors about Alzheimer Disability Awareness at the Ranchos/Hills Senior Center. They will high-

Baking Team includes: Tammy Tremble – a variety of cakes, pies, cookies, lemon bars and caramel popcorn; Gerri Mitchell, Celetta Mitchell and Alice Mitchell – brownies and assorted specialty cookies; Diane Campbell – an assortment of sweet breads; Diane Maxfield – different types of sweet breads; Connie Prince – cupcakes.

Tammy always welcomes anyone who attends the Senior Center to help with donating their own specialty baked goods to the Saturday Sale. No advance notice is required. You can bring in any baked item to the Senior Center on the Friday before each Saturday Sale, by 11 a.m. She gathers donated baked items and prepares them for the Bake Sale.

Our September Potluck is on Thursday, Sept. 10 at 6 p.m. The monthly potlucks are open to all seniors in the community and are an opportunity to meet some seniors who live in the Madera Ranchos area. Please call for more information and to sign up for the Senior Center September Potluck at 559-645-4864.

We have some fun group activities planned to celebrate Grandparents Day, Sunday Sept. 13.

All seniors are welcome to join the Senior Center Exercise Class each Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 10 to 11 each week. There is no cost or sign up required,

Please see **SENIORS** on P. 12



August Potluck Night at the Ranchos/Hills Senior Center was attended by (from left) Bill Prince, Jim Johnson, Jeanne Johnson, Connie Prince, Carol Wood, Becky Matli, Scott Williams, Mary Flowe and Curtis Flowe.

light the 10 warning signs that a person may experience at the onset of developing Alzheimer’s. All seniors living in the community are welcome to attend the presentation on Thursday, Sept. 10 at 10 a.m. This is a free community event, so if you are interested, please call the Senior Center at 559-645-4864 so we are prepared with comfortable seating arrangements for everyone attending. We encourage seniors as well as all community members to attend these informational meetings.

September is just around the corner and we are looking forward to cooler days and the softer gentle breezes of autumn.

Our Monthly Saturday Sale is on Sept. 5 from 8 a.m. to noon. We have been receiving community donations for the monthly Saturday Sale, so come in and check out all the new things in the Treasure House, Scout Garden and Boutique. Thank you to all the people who have given items to help support our local nonprofit Ranchos/Hills community Senior Center.

The members of the Ranchos/Hills Senior Center would like to honor Tammy Trimble in a Senior Spotlight for her volunteer work at the center. Tammy came to help us last year with her baking talent and organization of baked goods for the Senior Center after Juanita Williams stepped down after many years of leadership. The

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Lunches to be Cool for Back to School

(August 2016)

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.



loved them. Thinking back it just may have been the bologna that we bought at a meat market. It was a stick that you sliced at home and it had a wrapping on it that you had to peel off before eating it. We didn't have the plastic wrap or the sandwich bags we have today. Everything was wrapped in wax paper, even potato chips and cookies. And did you get an orange in your lunch? Mama always "scored" it (run the tip of a paring knife in a circle around the top and strips down the sides) so it would be easier to peel.

Have you had trouble in the past with someone stealing your child's sandwich out of his lunch bag? I have the solution! There is a site on the internet for Anti-theft Sandwich bags. After looking at them, I can understand why no one would want to eat the sandwich they just stole. This sandwich bag

is made to look like the sandwich in it is all moldy. I know some kids that would think it a blast for someone to try to steal their sandwich.

Sandwich Ideas

There are so many combinations available today for sandwiches. There isn't just white or brown bread; there is pita bread, mini croissants, sandwich rolls (cut to the size your child can handle), and tortillas for wraps. Or how about peanut butter on raisin bread? And so many different kinds of fillings. Not just bologna, ham or cheese, or combinations thereof. My mom would take the leftover Sunday roast and put it through the food grinder (they didn't have food processors in those days), added Miracle Whip – of course you could add mayo – and use it as a spread for

sandwiches.

I love a good tuna fish sandwich, but I want to eat it as soon as it is made, because I don't like to let it sit and make the bread soggy. When I worked, I would fix the sandwich as usual, only not put the tuna on. I would put the tuna in a separate container then put it on the bread when I was ready to eat lunch.

I was on the internet looking for ideas for this article and I found some excellent sites. I Googled "school kids lunches" and "school kids sandwiches."

Having trouble getting your child to eat a good whole wheat bread because he or she only wants white bread? How about using one slice of white and one slice of whole wheat with a design on each. Put the two slices of bread together before putting in the filling, and using a cookie cutter, cut a design from the center of each slice. Then take the design from the brown slice and put it in the spot that was cut from the white bread and do the same with the white slice. At least you'll get them to eat half brown bread.

Or how about a wrap? Put a

flour tortilla in the microwave for about 20 seconds so it will be easier to roll. Using your choice of fillings: lettuce that has been sliced very thin, grape tomatoes, sliced olives, red bell pepper that has been chopped, grated cheese and sliced turkey or ham lunch meat. Spread the tortilla with ranch dressing and layer each ingredient on half of the tortillas. Fold in each side of the tortilla and roll the wrap from the end with the filling, making sure to tuck in the filling as you roll. You can cut the roll in half if you wish to make it easier to handle.

Sandwich on a Stick?

Or how about a sandwich on a stick for fun? Using the ingredients your child would like in a sandwich, put it on a stick. Cube a slice of bread, cheese of choice and lunch meat. Slide onto a skewer with other foods your child will eat. Olives, pickles, grape tomatoes or a piece of lettuce. You might want to add a little container of ranch dressing for dipping. Also, I would suggest not using the skewers that look like big toothpicks – don't think the school would appreciate a child playing with them after they eat their lunch. I've seen packages of the sticks used for candy apples in the grocery store that might work better than the skewer.

Who says lunch has to be a sandwich? There are all kinds of things you can use for box lunches. How about a thermos of warm leftover stew or soup from the night before dinner? Or a piece of left over pizza – yes, I know kids (and adults) that will eat cold pizza. Or a spaghetti sandwich – yes, spaghetti! Butter two slices of bread, put the spaghetti on one and top with the other and Viola! A spaghetti sandwich. I know adults that will eat that!

I hope I have been able to give you some ideas for lunch boxes or bags. And I didn't even get into the desserts available. There all kinds of prepackaged cookies and some just 100 calories, and there are all of the prepackaged gelatins, puddings and fruit that are available. If you are afraid to send one of your good spoons (I know they can be tossed with the wrappers), why not purchase a package of disposable spoons so you don't need to worry?

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2. Because the Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce is a close-knit organization in which members support each other's businesses.
3. Because the Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce requires financial support in order to perform its job of increasing the economic prosperity of Southeast Madera County.
4. Because the Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce unifies the public spirit of Southeast Madera County, directing it into useful and constructive channels that are not limited to business.
5. Because I feel an obligation to improve the quality of life in Southeast Madera County.



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8/26

When is the NEXT Chamber of Commerce Meeting?

The Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce would love to see you at our next meeting, Wednesday, September 9, at 6 p.m., 37167 Ave. 12 Suite 5C in the Maywood Center. Come join us and be a part of what's going on in your community. Call us at 559-645-4001.

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ORGANIZE cont. from P. 3

feel welcoming?" "What needs to change to create a clear path?" Just because there's a lot of stuff doesn't mean everything has to go.

The shoes might be saying, "We need a basket or shoe rack here." The wall might add, "How about some decorative hooks for backpacks, bags, and leashes?"

The Amazon boxes might tell you they're feeling neg-

lected or out of control. Taking a few minutes to process them daily will keep the path clear.

When the area says, "You're done!" choose another and put it on your schedule. A little focused attention can go a long way in creating a home that communicates peace and productivity.

For more info, contact Organized By Choice at 559-871-3314 or email them at info@organizedbychoice.com.

SENIORS cont. from P. 8

you can just come and participate. Jo Chase loves to welcome new seniors who want to improve their level of fitness as we age.

Brown Bag Day is on Wednesday, Sept. 23 from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The Senior Center is a local food distribution site for the Madera County Food Bank's Brown Bag Program. You can still get an application and sign up for the Brown Bag with the Madera Food Bank.

The Odd Fellows Breakfast is on Sunday, Sept. 20 from 7:30 a.m. to 11 a.m.

They are located at 28860 Ave. 15 in Madera. The Sunday Breakfast is wonderful and a great way to start the week.

The Senior Center has weekly and monthly activities for seniors to enjoy. Come in any weekday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. and pick up our monthly newsletter and calendar. The Senior Center will be closed on Monday, Sept. 7 to observe Labor Day. Enjoy the holiday from the members of the Rancho/Hills Senior Center.

Quote for September: "Respect your parents and grandparents, they passed school without Google." — Anonymous

YOGA cont. from P. 4

specifically designed to improve mobility, balance, flexibility and overall well-being through safe, accessible movement practices.

"Our studio is a welcoming space for every soul and every level," Molly said. "There is no pressure here, just presence."

What sets Zen Den apart is its use of infrared heating technology. The studio is maintained at a comfortable temperature of approximately 89 degrees, creating a warm environment that supports movement without the intensity often associated with traditional hot yoga.

Unlike conventional forced-air systems, infrared heat warms the body directly, helping to increase circulation, improve flexibility and promote muscle recovery. Many students find the gentle warmth allows them to move more comfortably while creating a relaxing, spa-like atmosphere.

The boutique style studio also emphasizes holistic wellness beyond the yoga mat. Throughout the year, Zen Den hosts special events and community-centered programs, including Couples Yoga experiences, wellness workshops and seasonal challenges designed to encourage healthy habits and personal growth.

Zen Den launched its "Power Yoga Journey" in July, a 31-day wellness initia-

tive that combined regular yoga practice, mindfulness activities and simple lifestyle changes. Participants were encouraged to commit to a yoga schedule, establish a daily meditation and journaling practice, and choose one positive lifestyle shift that supports their overall well-being.

The program reflects Molly's belief that meaningful transformation happens through small, consistent actions.

"Whether someone is looking to reduce stress, improve flexibility, build strength, or simply reconnect with themselves, we want them to know they don't have to do it alone," Ohanian said. "Community support is a powerful part of the journey."

As Zen Den continues to grow, Molly hopes the studio will become more than a fitness destination. She envisions it as a community gathering place where people can find balance, connection, and support in their daily lives.

Zen Den Holistic Power Yoga is currently welcoming new students. The studio offers drop-in classes, membership options, and introductory opportunities for first-time visitors.

For more information about classes, schedules, and upcoming events, visit www.zendenmadera.com or stop by the studio and experience the community firsthand. After all, Zen Den's message remains simple: Come As You Are.

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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.

	+		÷		= 12			
+		+		+				
	+		÷		= 5			
÷		-		÷				
	+		÷		= 6			
=		=		=				
2		10		2				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

SEMCU speaks

The Vision For A Community Park

By Igal Treibatch

Madera Ranchos and Bonadelle Ranchos were developed as rural communities in the mid-60s. No real effort was made to offer any real community bonding infrastructure. I have been farming in southeast Madera since 1989 and had the pleasure of integrating with the community and the folks in it. I got together with some of the local folks and together we filed in 2010 for a non-profit community-based organization (SEMCU) to help bring the community closer and help chart a course for the future.

Although there are schools available, there is an important element missing to help the community, and in particular youngsters, to develop community bonding experiences and growing attachment to the local place of residents. Years back, there was an attempt by the county to develop a community park without success.

Recently, after discussing the subject with Supervisor Jordan Wamhoff, the SEMCU board has brought up the park idea again at our meeting and started to work on the project. We are in the process of reaching out to landowners and companies that are conducting business in south-



east Madera with a fund-raising campaign specifically for a park. We knew it would be a long haul, demanding many hours of work and fundraising. While we prepared and sent out fundraising packets, we also started to look inside our community. I found out Jordan Wamhoff is already working, as part of Madera County, on such a project. It was exciting to find out and as our discussion went on, we talked about the possibility of SEMCU collaborating with the County. As a SEMCU representative, I met with potential landowners who may be interested in donating land for the park. Both Wamhoff and I are in such discussions with different

parties with the hopes to “land” enough acres for the park.

The plan should be modest but effective. We will need up to five acres within the community for a park that will have enough activity features to satisfy youngsters and adults alike. Within the park, we

envision a baseball field, a soccer field, tennis/pickleball court, a basketball court, a children’s playground area, a party area, a kiosk with a park ranger’s office and overall lights. This is a big challenge for a small community, but the residents have been looking for a park for a long time and this project’s possibility has excited the community. We are aware of the difficulties ahead and we are committed to moving forward with the project. This is a continuing step in our quest to make this a successful reality, and we are asking for your generosity to help make this a reality. We are not talking just about money. We would like to invite the community to join

our efforts by participating in the process. This is not just SEMCU’s effort, this is a community project and we at SEMCU hope that some of you may be interested in taking a part in this project together with Supervisor Wamhoff. We invite the public to join us at our next meeting when we will be discussing the park and our ongoing efforts. Participation is very simple with your phone or computer. See below for instructions.

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 community, 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 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, Sept. 15 at 6 p.m. Make your voice heard!

**SEMCU is “By the community,
for the community”**

GEN WHY cont. from P. 6

deeply in showing people Christlike love, and she extended it to family, friends, acquaintances and often complete strangers. She was generous with grace in a way I still admire. She could be hurt and still choose compassion. She could be disappointed and still make room for forgiveness.

And she always believed in me. When I was a teenager screwing up, she believed in me. When I was a young adult still figuring out who I was and sometimes doing a spectacularly poor job of it, she believed in me. There were moments when the available evidence did not support her optimism whatsoever, but she kept believing in me and somehow saw the woman I could become long be-

fore I did. I only wish she had lived long enough to see me become her.

Ten years after losing her, I still see pieces of her everywhere, including in myself. A phrase will come out of my own mouth and I’ll realize I sound exactly like her. I’ll find myself encouraging someone, forgiving someone or showing up for someone even when I’m tired, and I know a big part of that came from watching her. I hope the people I love feel a fraction of what she made people feel.

Ten years has been long enough to understand something I may not have fully appreciated when she was here. A life is not only measured by how long someone gets to stay, but by how much love remains after they are gone, and Mama sure left an awful lot of it behind.

TOO LATE? cont. from P. 2

seek to define themselves ahead of the general election.

Becerra, a former US Health and Human Services secretary and California attorney general, has emphasized Democratic priorities and opposition to President Trump. Hilton, a former Fox News host, has campaigned on cutting taxes and regulations and attacking California’s high cost of living. Fifty-five percent of his support-

ers said they back him because of his traditionally Republican policies, while 28 percent said they liked him because he is outside California’s political establishment.

The matchup between Trump-endorsed Hilton and former Biden Health and Human Services Secretary Becerra to replace termed-out Gov. Gavin Newsom, who is weighing a 2028 presidential bid, is slated for Nov. 3.

This story originally appeared at NewYorkPost.com.

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Strange BUT TRUE

- On average, it takes between 12 to 14 dates before couples will trade house keys.
- In 1915, the Kansas legislature introduced a bill that would make it a misdemeanor for a woman under age 44 to wear lipstick because it would "create a false impression."
- The rocket frog can jump more than six feet by releasing energy it stores in its tendons.
- When language barriers caused confusion during international soccer tournaments, English referee Ken Aston was inspired to create the yellow and red card system while sitting at a traffic light. The cards were introduced at the 1970 World Cup.
- Ancient Romans sent slaves into the mountains to collect snow that they flavored with fruits and juices to create their own version of ice cream.
- Sunlight hitting Earth for one hour contains more energy than the world uses in a year.
- Wagyu beef, generally held to be some of the world's best, usually comes from cows raised in Japan with such luxuries as massages, a better diet and longer lifespans.

Thought for the Day: *"One thorn of experience is worth a whole wilderness of warnings."* -- James Russell Lowell

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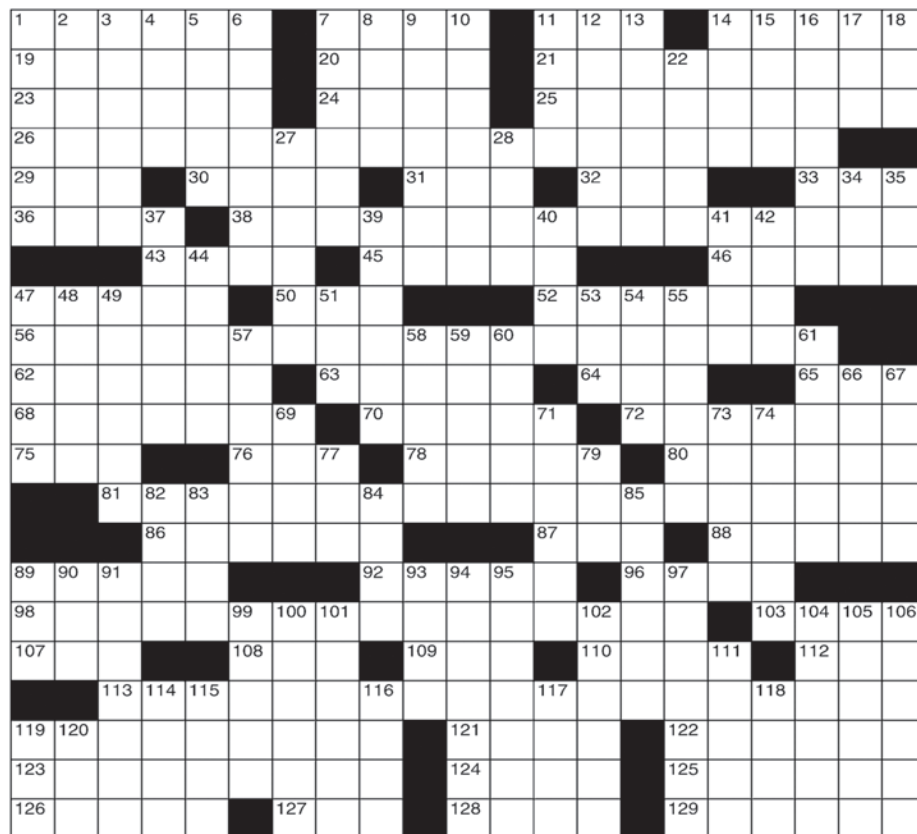


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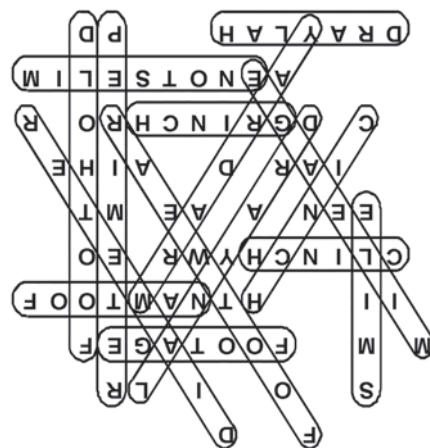
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ANSWERS

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



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



ACROSS

- 1 Lie down in rest
- 7 Pedometer unit
- 11 Trial fig.
- 14 Pig in a kids' series
- 19 A bit coarse, as humor
- 20 — sapiens
- 21 Informal talks
- 23 Personae non — (unwelcome sorts)
- 24 At the summit
- 25 Nielsens, e.g.
- 26 Start of a riddle
- 29 Granola bit
- 30 Goose of Hawaii
- 31 Many a craft brew, in brief
- 32 — center (play area)
- 33 Thu. follower
- 36 "That's — blow!"
- 38 Riddle, part 2
- 43 Suffix with billion
- 45 High-IQ crew
- 46 Harp relatives
- 47 Uncouth sorts
- 50 Ortiz of "Ugly Betty"

- 52 City near Seattle
- 56 Riddle, part 3
- 62 Hat for Indiana Jones
- 63 Esther of "Good Times"
- 64 China's Chou En- —
- 65 Uncertainties
- 68 Very last part
- 70 Opus
- 72 Freaks out
- 75 Gore, Roker and Pacino
- 76 Relative of .edu or .org
- 78 Base for head hair
- 80 Like many Coast Guard rescues
- 81 Riddle, part 4
- 86 Feature of the word "jot"
- 87 Execs' mag
- 88 Idea sources
- 89 Skylit lobbies
- 92 Project deets
- 96 James of "Alien Nation"
- 98 End of the riddle
- 103 Pirate's drink
- 107 Bunch
- 108 "Deck the Halls"

- 109 Mined stuff
- 110 Egyptian canal
- 112 Year, in Brazil
- 113 Riddle's answer
- 119 Like the work of insurance risk calculators
- 121 "Bye-bye!"
- 122 Walk really quietly
- 123 Lambastes
- 124 Pre-'91 empire
- 125 "7 Rings" singer
- 126 Applesauce brand
- 127 "Fancy that!"
- 128 Chinese dog, in brief
- 129 Became taut

DOWN

- 1 Singer Belle or Spektor
- 2 Lengthy reprimand
- 3 Beseech reverently
- 4 Preminger of film
- 5 Former teen idol Cassidy

- 6 Glasses and contacts
- 7 Unselfish sort
- 8 Carry around
- 9 Like theatrical behavior
- 10 Appear like a jack-in-the-box
- 11 Last part of some plays
- 12 Saloon
- 13 Castle tower
- 14 Org. against leather
- 15 Estrada of "CHiPs"
- 16 Miss terribly
- 17 Tent stake
- 18 Hoofed beast
- 22 Nickname for Louis Armstrong
- 27 Make beloved
- 28 Sculling tools
- 34 Comic Issa
- 35 SSNs, e.g.
- 37 Artist Andy
- 39 Iconic "Dragnet" line
- 40 Granola bits
- 41 Often-tickled Muppet
- 42 With 48-Down, "Barry Lyndon" star

- 44 French river or depart-ment
- 47 U.K.'s counterpart to an Oscar
- 48 See 42-Down
- 49 A bit strange
- 51 Neither's partner
- 53 Ocean east of Ga.
- 54 Mined stuff
- 55 Columbus citizen
- 57 Mexican general Villa
- 58 Donovan of "Clueless"
- 59 Decide (to)
- 60 Decompose
- 61 "— Cousins" (Elvis Presley film)
- 66 Grazing area
- 67 Doesn't leave
- 69 Mail slot spot
- 71 Plaza Hotel girl
- 73 Rho follower
- 74 Botching it up
- 77 "Rocky III" co-star
- 79 Wordplay bit
- 82 "That so?"
- 83 Persian ruler
- 84 Like a snoop

- 85 Build up, as interest
- 89 Piercing tool
- 90 Even if, in brief
- 91 Snare drum sound
- 93 Inadequate
- 94 Annual basketball contest on the Continent
- 95 Silk nightdress
- 97 Proficient in
- 99 Pong maker
- 100 Clamping down on
- 101 Lordly home
- 102 Beachward
- 104 Believers in Jah, informally
- 105 Common soccer score
- 106 Conk out, as a machine
- 111 Old name of the Congo
- 114 "Hooper" star Reynolds
- 115 Junior miss
- 116 Big ice mass
- 117 Bit of work
- 118 Revolve
- 119 It's pressed for cash
- 120 Co. big shot

Say you saw it in the Independent

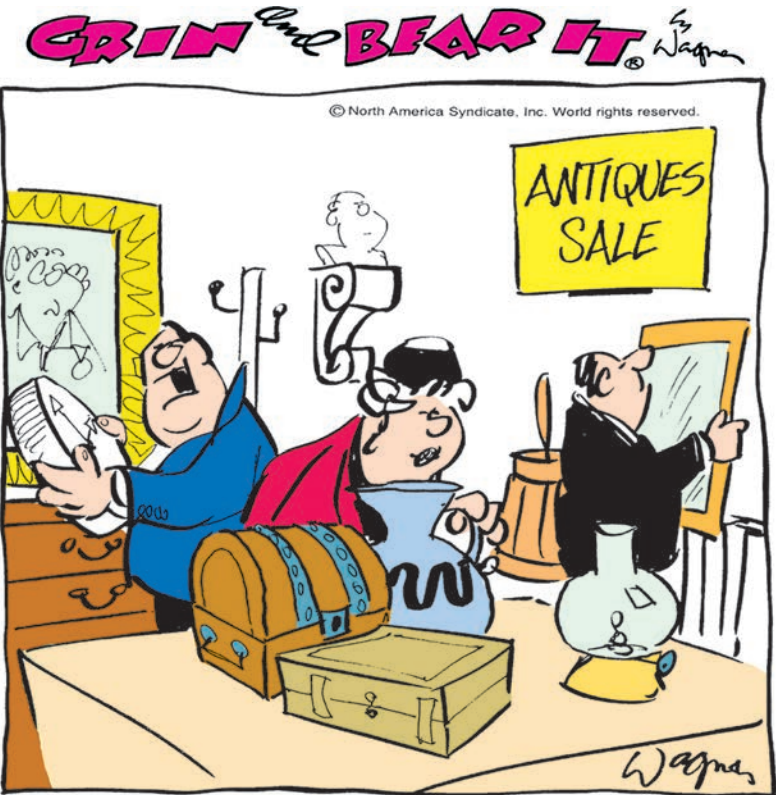
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Just Like Cats & Dogs by Dave T. Phipps

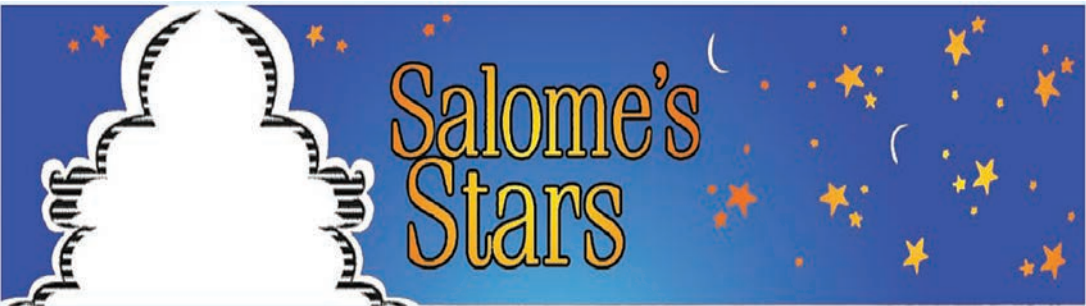




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“This dates back to one of the early Antiques Roadshows!”



ARIES (March 21 to April 19) Be careful not to allow the backers of a new financial "deal" to pull the wool over the Lamb's eyes. It could hold fewer plusses and more negatives.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20) It's a good idea to finish all incomplete tasks so you can devote your attention to next week's projects. The weekend could hold surprises for romantic Fernandas and Ferdinands!

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20) A workplace suggestion you made a while ago could come back with a request to turn it into a reality. Meanwhile, your social life picks up this weekend.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22) Someone from the past could return with an intriguing opportunity for a project. By all means, check into it, but don't neglect your current responsibilities.

LEO (July 23 to August 22) Keeping your claws sheathed and using good humor to counter someone who's bad-mouthing the Big Cat isn't easy. But it's the best way to avoid more problems down the line.

VIRGO (August 23 to September 22) A workplace situation could improve if you're less critical and more supportive of those who are, after all, trying to do their best. Let them know that you're there to help when necessary.

LIBRA (September 23 to October 22) A new job offer might not carry all the benefits that you're seeking. Make sure that you know what you're entitled to, what's off the table, and what's negotiable before you make a decision.

SCORPIO (October 23 to November 21) A social obligation that you'd rather get out of could hold some surprisingly positive aspects. Why not go and see it for yourself? Also, a family member makes a curious request.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22 to December 21) Before tackling a new project awaiting you at home or on the job, take time out for some much-deserved pampering to help lift your spirits and restore your energy levels.

CAPRICORN (December 22 to January 19) Your social calendar begins to fill up more quickly than you expected, which is great. You deserve to enjoy some good fun after so much time spent on serious matters.

AQUARIUS (January 20 to February 18) A domestic situation continues to improve, thanks to all the tender, loving concern that you've shown. A colleague makes a questionable move that you might want to check out sooner rather than later.

PISCES (February 19 to March 20) A sudden turn in a romantic relationship calls for both a rational and passionate response. Keep the love level high, but also find out why the problem arose in the first place.

Born this Week

*You often set high standards for others. But to your credit,
you also set the same expectations for yourself.
You'd be an excellent coach or mentor.*

FUN PAGES

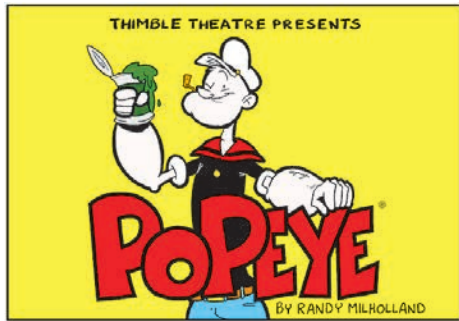
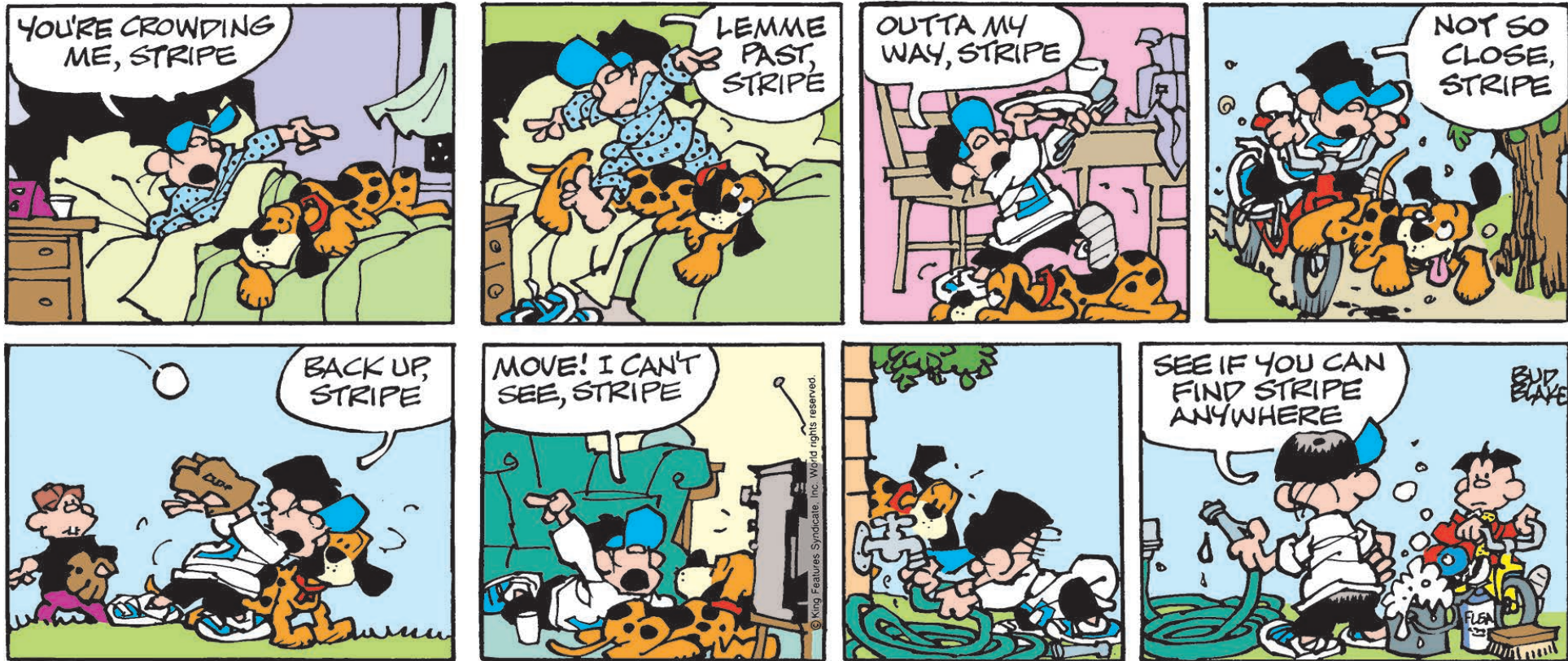
Kids' Maze



TIGER

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by BUD BLAKE



TRIVIA TEST

By Fifi Rodriguez

1. **TELEVISION:** Which musical instrument does Leonard play in "The Big Bang Theory"? 2. **MUSIC:** In what year did the Woodstock music festival take place? 3. **MOVIES:** Which horror movie features a character named Ellen Ripley? 4. **HISTORY:** When did the French Revolution begin? 5. **FOOD & DRINK:** What is carpaccio? 6. **U.S. STATES:** How many states border Mexico? 7. **GAMES:** How many wooden blocks are in the game of Jenga? 8. **GEOGRAPHY:** What is the longest mountain chain in the world? 9. **ART:** Who painted the "Mona Lisa"? 10. **MATH:** How many sides does a hexagon have?

1. Cello.
2. 1969.
3. "Alien."
4. 1789.
5. Thinly sliced raw meat or fish.
6. Four: California, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas.
7. 54.
8. The Andes in South America.
9. Leonardo da Vinci.
10. Six.

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Click on "Local News" at

Amber Waves

GERALD, DEAR, YOU ONLY EAT MAC & CHEESE AND FISH STICKS. TRY THIS CASSEROLE I MADE.

MMPHH...

GULP! CHOAK! ACKK!

YEAH, MY TASTE BUDS HAVE A STRICT "2-INGREDIENT POLICY."

by Dave T. Phipps

The Spats

GULP

I WISH I WAS A BANANA...

...I'D REALLY LIKE TO SPLIT!!

by Jeff Pickering

Out on a Limb

RUNNING WITH THE BULLS, PAMPLONA, SPAIN

RUMBLE RUMBLE RUMBLE

POWER WALKING WITH THE BICHONS, PALM BEACH, FLORIDA

YIP YIP YIP YIP YIP YIP

by Gary Kopervas

HOCUS-FOCUS BY HENRY BOLTINOFF

Find at least six differences in details between panels.

Differences: 1. Arm is raised. 2. Poster is smaller. 3. Weight is missing. 4. Cap is reversed. 5. Line in sidewalk is moved. 6. Leg is moved.

SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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

Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ★

★ Moderate ★★ Challenging
★★★ HOO BOY!
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The Independent
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MAGIC MAZE ● MEASURED WORDS

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

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

Cinch	Foothold	Halyard	Perimeter
Clinch	Footman	Lanyard	Smile
Diameter	Footwear	Mileage	Yardarm
Footage	Grinch	Milestone	

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FUN PAGES

SEMCU

south east madera county united

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

DEHYDRATION ALERT !!

Educate your kids & the elderly as to how to protect themselves during this **DANGEROUS HEAT** season!!

They should always carry a bottle of water in their backpack, wear light clothing to protect them from the sun, and wear a hat to protect their heads!

Also keep your pets safe, inside when excessively hot and **NEVER** locked inside a vehicle, not even with the windows cracked!

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DELIVERY &
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& enter meeting ID#: 836 3242 4343, then access code 854 221

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