

The Ranchos Independent



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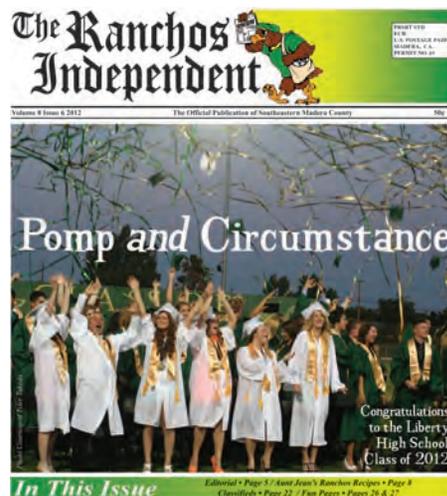
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Looking Back:
Taking a look back at the top stories in the Ranchos for 2012



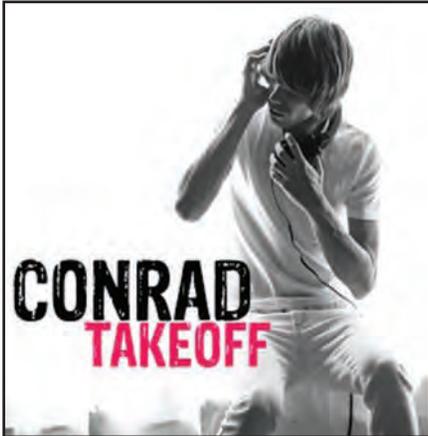
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ROCKIN' IN THE RANCHOS

A look at who's making the noise in the Ranchos
by Christi McKinney

Conrad's career "Takes Off" in a BIG Way



Conrad recently released the video to his latest song, "Romeo," which was filmed right here in the Valley. You'll quickly recognize shots of River Park, Woodward Park and Friant, along with inside shots of Rome Night Club in Fresno. Though Conrad's public relations team finds it simpler to say he's from Fresno, Conrad is very proud to

let people know that he's from the Madera Ranchos. "I miss the Ranchos every day," he said. "I'm excited to say I got to shoot my music video for Romeo where I grew up. I really want to show the world the side of the Central Valley that the media never shows."

Conrad, born Jared Blair, grew up here in the Ranchos attending Webster Elementary and Liberty High School where he graduated in 2006. Two years after graduating from Liberty High School he left the Ranchos with a one-way train ticket to Los Angeles, a suitcase and \$40 in his pocket to pursue his dream of a career in music.

Conrad credits his first grade teacher at Webster Elementary School, Carol McKercher, with nourishing his interest in music saying "I had a special bond with Mrs. McKercher who happened to love music. I would stay in with her at recess and she taught me how to play the piano and to sing," he said.

Conrad now writes all his own music although he didn't start performing as a solo artist until he moved to LA. When asked about

his musical influences he said, "I would literally sit in my room all day long just listening to music nonstop. I listened to a lot of pop music and the then popular boy bands. When I go into the studio we just play around and see what becomes," he said. "My music is pop with a rock edge. When I wrote the music for 'Takeoff' I wanted all of the songs to be positive. There are pure pop songs and R&B influenced songs. There is an acoustic guitar ballad called 'Safe Here Now' I wrote about my good friend and her struggle with losing her father from cancer. Romeo acquired a slight 'Maroon 5' vibe to it. I love how this song turned out." Conrad just finished a brand new single called Young Again that will be released near the end of the year. "The music is still young but more pop, rock ballad with a more grown up sound to it," he said.

Conrad's family is still here in the Ranchos and he makes it home a couple of times a year. You can stay on top of his appearances on his Facebook page at Official Conrad and stay tuned for appearances yet to be announced.

The Coffee Spot Rocker Takes You ... Completely ... South of Sanity

Also on the Ranchos music scene is Dan Damore, owner of The Coffee Spot. Dan rocked out with his band South of Sanity at The Coffee Spot's 1st Birthday celebration recently. They were on fire and gave everyone a taste of their hard rock tracks. "We're back out playing now and will be performing soon at Babylon in Fresno," Dan said happily. Dan and his wife Audra also continue to host Open Mic Night Saturdays at The Coffee Spot. Just sign up ahead of time so they know to expect you. Keep track of South of Sanity's schedule on their Facebook page or stop by and ask Dan or Audra at The Coffee Spot.



If One Ace is Good, 51 Aces are WAY Better

One of the hottest bands performing in Central California these days has its home base right here in the Madera Ranchos. 51 Aces is an original and classic rock cover band that has been making a huge buzz all over Central California. 51 Aces' versions of classic rock songs have their own rock edge to them, played a little heavier with concert type endings that go over the top but never too far so that the original isn't recognized. "Not only is this band an amazing group of performers, but they put on a high energy show," said their manager, Randy Woodward. And boy, does he have them hopping. They were scheduled for 16 performances in the month of October. They were booked for every Friday and Saturday till the end of the year beginning in June. They recently set a record for attendance at ApCal with 1,200 fans in attendance. They played the Fresno Fair this year right after Foreigner and fol-

lowed ZZ Top last year.

51 Aces is comprised of Allen Woodward, vocals and guitar; Tom Austin, bass player; Gino Castillo, guitarist and self-described happiness coordinator; and Josh on drums.

Allen Woodward is the front man. He's an awesome showman, belting out classic rock songs as if he's from that era. Allen, 25, is too young to have known many of these tunes when they were hits, but his very supportive parents, Randy and Lisa Woodward, raised him listening to this music. Some of



Allen's moves defy gravity. He makes a mind-bending limbo style backbend till his hair touches the ground behind him while playing the guitar and singing. Amazingly, he only discovered his talent for singing a few years ago after a buddy dared him to take the stage at a karaoke bar.

Allen plans on making music his profession and he's got the work ethic to make that happen. He writes lyrics and collaborates with the band on music. He also performs acoustic music on his own. He'll be taking time off in January to go to Nashville to record. "I want my own sound. I don't want to sound like everyone else," Allen said.

They all say it's great to get paid to do what you love to do, but better yet they're doing it with their buddies at their side. They all have a deep love of music and they're thoroughly enjoying their success. Make time to find out where you can catch them next by following them on Facebook or on their website at www.51aces.com. You'll be reminded how much you loved and have missed classic rock music.

2012 • Top Ranchos Stories

from the pages of the Ranchos Independent

1 Death of Lexi Delgado/March •

The death of a child is never easy, and it was even more difficult when the Ranchos took 14-year-old Lexi's cancer fight under its collective wing through fundraisers and countless volunteer efforts. Just when it looked like she had turned the corner and was in remission, the cancer roared back and in no time she was gone. Heartbreaking.

2 The Flag Barn/February & June •

After some incredibly harsh winter winds, the iconic "flag barn" at Avenue 12 and Highway 41 looked like it was on its last legs. After an incredible outpouring of sentiment, the owners of the property finally got the message that the barn meant something to the Ranchos. By June there were repair teams at work and a flag raising ceremony was possible July 4th.

3 What's Happening to Our Water?/August •

All of a sudden, during a particularly nasty heat spell last summer, people had no water. No water to cook with or bathe with or wash clothes in -- nothing. It brought into sharp focus how precarious the Ranchos' water supply is. An antiquated system coupled with dwindling supplies brought home that sooner or later we are going to have to do something.

4 Water Privatization/April •

Four months before the Ranchos' water problem (see above), an outside group was meeting with Madera County Supervisors to present the prospect of privatizing Madera County's water system, including the Ranchos. At issue for the Ranchos was the fact that the County didn't own our water system (although they do service it) so how could they consider selling it? Talks slosh on ...

5 Trash Collection Confusion/October •

This was a Public Relations debacle from the git-go. All of a sudden the Ranchos' County-provided trash service was out and no one knew what was going on. That company, it was discovered, was defrauding the County but that information didn't get out until the Ranchos was thoroughly confused and angry.

Please see **TOP** on P. 17

Madera Ranchos Teen Gets Shot at Pro Baseball Experience in Australia



The opportunity of a lifetime awaits a 16-year-old Madera Ranchos baseball player who leaves for Australia for two weeks in December to play baseball against some of Australia's best players.

DeAndre Smith is a 16-year-old junior at Liberty High School and a lifetime resident of the Madera Ranchos who has been selected to play on the Goodwill Series baseball team that will be traveling to Sidney and Perth, Australia on Dec. 19 and will return to

the U.S. on Jan. 3, 2013. He will be playing 12-14 games, some of which will be against professional baseball teams; some of the best baseball players that Australia has to offer.

The Goodwill Series has been around for 30 years and pits the nation's best 15-18-year-old baseball players against foreign players in Australia and China. All of the coaches for the players are major league baseball pro scouts for the Chicago Cubs, Houston Astros, Washington Nationals and

San Diego Padres.

DeAndre will be playing on the Washington National team, playing centerfield and pitching, and will be in good company with the Goodwill Series. In the 2010 All Star game, 22 players were former Goodwill Series players, including Albert Puljos and Brain Wilson.

DeAndre's family are confident he will be able to enhance his baseball skills and gain confidence in himself from the experience.

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School Tragedy, Gun Control Truths



By Peter M. Friedman

As a father of three and grandfather of three, I can't imagine the grief being suffered by the parents and families of the murdered children in Newtown, Conn. No sane person has the ability to grasp the personal emptiness. As a parent and grandparent, I grieve in empathy.

As usual however, the gun control advocates are coming out of the bushes once again to further their own agenda, but there must be truth told and I will attempt to tell it.

I am an NRA Firearms Instructor. I teach law-abiding persons how to safely and responsibly use firearms to which they are legally entitled in accordance with the Constitution's 2nd Amendment. The operative expressions again are "safely," "responsibly" and "legally entitled."

From current news reports, the shooter was in possession inside the school with Glock and Sig Sauer semi-automatic pistols. These are NOT full-automatic weapons, like a machine gun, as some news agencies have reported. Further, he was NOT in possession of an assault rifle. The police discovered a Bushmaster M4/AR15 .223 semi-automatic rifle in the car he parked at the school. Later reports stated that he used some type of rifle to enter the school. The Bushmaster M4/AR15 .223 semi-automatic rifle isn't a full-automatic like its military counterpart used by our troops. Again, it is NOT an assault rifle as Dianne Feinstein at-

tempts to portray. It is a rifle that looks like the military counterpart, but is not. A similar rifle is the Ruger mini-14, which uses the exact same cartridge as a .223 and is magazine fed just like the Bushmaster. However, the Ruger does not visually appear as "sinister-looking" as the Bushmaster. That's the main visual difference (Google them for further reference).

From news reports several other facts have emerged:

1. The shooter killed his mother and "stole" the guns he used which were registered to her. Obviously they were not secured properly.

2. The shooter was being treated for several personality disorders including bi-polar disorder. There should have been no possibility for him to access firearms in the home under these conditions. The mother should have secured her firearms elsewhere out of his reach.

3. This school had no armed security guard and was specifically designated as a "no gun zone" making it completely defenseless against what occurred.

As a comparison to other similar situations, in Israel parents of school children suffer the daily possibility of such an event that occurred recently in Connecticut. In the past 60 years, Israeli parents have had to deal with Muslim terrorists invading Israeli schools and homes to slaughter Jewish children and families. The most recent atrocity was the slaughter of the entire Fogel family, including the beheading of their 3-year-old daughter. Israeli schools are guarded by not only armed guards who verify everyone entering the school, but by many teachers and staff members who are also armed. The Muslim terrorists are keenly

Please see **TEA PARTY** on P. 11

Israeli schools are guarded by not only armed guards who verify everyone entering the school, but by many teachers and staff members who are also armed. The Muslim terrorists are keenly aware of this and have mostly refrained from further attempts.

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Guest Editorial

Election Post Mortem

By Laura Hollis

I am already reading so many pundits and other talking heads analyzing the disaster that was this year's elections. I am adding my own ten cents. Here goes:

1. We are outnumbered

We accurately foresaw the enthusiasm, the passion, the commitment, the determination, and the turnout. Married women, men, independents, Catholics, evangelicals – they all went for Romney in percentages as high or higher than the groups which voted for McCain in 2008. It wasn't enough. What we saw in the election on Tuesday was a tipping point: we are now at a place where there are legitimately fewer Americans who desire a free republic with a free people than there are those who think the government should give them stuff. There are fewer of us who believe in the value of free exchange and free enterprise. There are fewer of us who do not wish to demonize successful people in order to justify taking from them. We are outnumbered. For the moment. It's just that simple.

2. It wasn't the candidate(s)

Some are already saying, "Romney was the wrong guy"; "He should have picked Marco Rubio to get Florida/Rob Portman to get Ohio/Chris Christie to get [someplace else]." With all due respect, these assessments are incorrect. Romney ran a strategic and well-organized campaign. Yes, he could have hit harder on

Benghazi. But for those who would have loved that, there are those who would have found it distasteful. No matter what tactic you could point to that Romney could have done better, it would have been spun in a way that was detrimental to his chances. Romney would have been an excellent president, and Ryan was an inspired choice. No matter who we ran this year, they would have lost. See #1, above.

3. It's the culture, stupid.

We have been trying to fight this battle every four years at the voting booth. It is long past time we admit that that is not where the battle really is. We abdicated control of the culture – starting back in the 1960s. And now our largest primary social institutions – education, the media, Hollywood (entertainment) have become really nothing more than an assembly line for cranking out reliable little Leftists. Furthermore, we have allowed the government to undermine the institutions that instill good character – marriage, the family, communities, schools, our churches. So, here we are, at least two full generations later – we are reaping what we have sown. It took nearly fifty years to get here; it will take another fifty years to get back. But it starts with the determination to reclaim education, the media, and the entertainment business. If we fail to do that, we can kiss every election goodbye from here on out. And much more.

4. America has become a nation of adolescents

The real loser in this election was adulthood: Maturity. Responsibility. The understanding that liberty must be accompanied by self-restraint. Obama is a spoiled child, and the behavior and language of his followers and their advertisements throughout the campaign makes it clear how many of them are, as well. Romney is a grown-up. Romney should have won. Those of us who expected him to win assumed that voters would act like grownups. Because if we were a nation of grownups, he would have won.

But what did win? Sex. Drugs. Bad language. Bad manners. Vulgarity. Lies. Cheating. Name-calling. Finger-pointing. Blaming. And irresponsible spending.

This does not bode well. People grow up one of two ways: either they choose to, or circumstances force them to. The warnings are all there, whether it is the looming economic disaster, or the inability of the government to respond to crises like Hur-

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The Ranchos Independent

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Merry Christmas and Goodbye 2012

By Audrey Stock

Hi neighbors,
 Last Wednesday, December 12 (12-12-12 ... isn't that a special date?) was a very busy day. I started the day with a ride to Fresno with my friend and retired teacher Arlene Henry. We attended the monthly California Retired Teachers Association meeting and luncheon. We were treated to the Retired Teachers 50 Member Chorus that sang Christmas Carols. If I hadn't already been in the Christmas spirit the music would have put me there. One of the chorus members just had her 100th birthday last summer. How about that for volunteering? This chorus sang not only for the CRTA members but was going to sing at four different rest homes in Fresno before Christmas. Retired teachers keep busy.

I got home at 2 p.m. and started baking cookies for the Chamber of Commerce Mixer and the Ranchos Hills Seniors. I have just returned from our local Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce mixer which had a nice turnout of local business people. If you want to know what is going on in the Madera Ranchos and surrounding neighborhood you should join the Chamber. The President, Ollie Ridge, and Virginia Vick delivered Christmas bags to the Veterans Hospital in Fresno on Dec. 17. I hope that you got your full bags for the Veterans to the Chamber in time for the delivery. I learned at the Chamber meeting the Madera Sheriff will be starting a new program for seniors on Jan. 1. It will be called the Elder Orphan Program for seniors who live alone. If you are interested you need to call the Sheriff's Dept. and give them your name, phone number and address. The program will call you in the

morning and at night to check on you. You will need a land line phone for it to work. This could give some seniors peace of mind about living alone.

Congratulations to the Liberty High Hawks football team, Division V Valley Champions. There are 33 boys on the team and this is the first Liberty High team to win the Valley Championship. This team won 12 of their games and lost only one game all season. Zach Rickey was the team quarterback. The winning game was against Corcoran and was played on our own football field at Liberty High. Liberty High is in the North Sequoia League that has many larger high schools than Liberty High. So again I say, congratulations to the Liberty High School football team. You are the best!

It is hard to believe that we are at the end of another year. This is always a busy time of the year as I am getting ready

for Christmas and out-of-town relatives start arriving. The outside lights are up thanks to the help of my family who put them up during the Thanksgiving holiday. I finally got my Christmas letter printed and all I need now is to have time to sit down and address Christmas cards. When I finish this article, I can cross it off of my "to do" list. The Christmas parties are in full swing. I love this time of the year but I wonder how I will get everything done by Christmas.

I wish all of the people of this community a Christmas that is rich in family love, warm with friendship and blessed with the joys of the season. After Christmas comes a brand new year, 2013. Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to each and every one. Be careful and I will see you next month.

I wish all of the people of this community a Christmas that is rich in family love, warm with friendship and blessed with the joys of the season.

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12/12

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Senior Report

A New President by the Holidays

By Verlaine Elinburg

The later part of the year in the United States is officially known as the holiday season. This is the time of the year when we experience a cluster of holidays, starting slowly with Halloween, which was brought to America by the immigrants of Western Europe, the British and the Irish. It picks up speed with Thanksgiving, an American tradition of expressing gratitude and the giving of thanks for our survival in the new world and as a celebration for the goodness of the season past. Christmas, Dec. 25 is an annual commemoration of the birth of Jesus Christ for Christians and a happy holiday for all others. New Year's follows as the first day of the new calendar year, in both the Gregorian calendar as well as the ancient Roman Julian calendar. It is the closest thing we



Ranchos resident Debbie Farr, left, gets sworn in as the newest president of the Ranchos/Hills Seniors.

have to being a truly global public holiday celebrated by all. Let's not forget the Jewish Festival of Lights, Hanukkah, celebrated every December and now Kwanzaa, a weeklong celebration held primarily by African Americans in the United States to honor universal principals.

The Ranchos/Hills Seniors celebrated its Christmas with a delicious dinner catered by the Ranchos Café and enjoyed by the members and some of their families. The occasion was closed with the installation of the new board members. There were thanks to all the volunteers that keep the Senior Hall functioning and for all of the hard work that goes into bringing in revenue, as the Rancho/Hills Center does not receive any assistance, being completely self-reliant.

The Ranchos/Hills Seniors is delighted to welcome Debbie Farr as its new president. She is a member in many of our local community organizations and will be valuable in bringing us all together where we can assist each other to obtain our individual goals to serve the Madera Ranchos. The Ranchos/Hills Seniors would like to thank its past President, Mike Thomson, for all of his support and hard work for the Senior Center during the past two years.

Upcoming Events

Snow Trip to Reno Feb. 26 – 28, 2013. \$365 per person. Contact 559-645-4864.

National Parks – Mt. Rushmore and Yellow Stone Park, Air/Bus 10 days, June 20, 2013. Contact 559-645-4864.

The Department of Health comes periodically to the Center for free checkups. The screenings include: Personal health history review, blood pressure and blood sugar test, nutrition and health education and a low-cost blood test is available. The health screenings are for 50 and above. For refer-

rals to medical providers and community services, the contact number is 675-7893 to make an appointment.

A nutritionally balanced lunch program is available Monday through Friday at 11:30 a.m. A suggested price for 60 years and older is \$1.75. Reservations are needed 24 hours in advance prior to 11 a.m. so

remember to call Joann at 645-4864 and also notify the center if you need to cancel or change your reservation.

We have a growing exercise program being held on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at 10 a.m. The participants are getting more than just exercise by attending. They have fun, share laughs, meet new friends and get updates on old friends, their fellow members and get current news on what is happening at the Center. There is room for you and you may attend all three days or just one or two of them.

On Tuesdays at 12:15 p.m. are a variety of card games to be enjoyed. Come and learn new games.

On Thursdays at 6 p.m. we have a great pot luck with poker and other great card games.

Check your calendar for daily events for each day of the week. If you do not have a copy of the newsletter, stop by the Senior Center for a copy. Additional copies are available at the Ranchos Market and Hurst Hardware and several businesses along Avenue 12.

The Farmers Market at the Center is toning down for the winter, but jams and jellies are still available. The Boutique also has many "on the spot" needed gift items.

Time for Christmas Treats

Here we are just a week away from Christmas. Are your cards addressed and ready to be mailed, gifts bought and wrapped and you've started baking?

Do you have people around you that you would like to give a little "thank you" gift, but don't know what to do for that person? The boy down the street that comes and helps you with your lawn, the shut-in from your church, the senior couple that live next door and look after your home when you are away, or even the paper boy (or girl in my case)? How about giving them a tray of home-baked goodies: a few cookies in a pretty little Christmas gift bag, a loaf of date, zucchini, or pumpkin bread, or even a half dozen muffins. Having come from you and knowing they are homemade might mean more than anything you could buy.



beat until smooth. Divide batter evenly among the muffin cups. Bake 18-20 minutes or until golden brown.

Makes 12 muffins.

Chocolate Chip Zucchini Cake

1 ¼ C sugar
1/3 C butter or margarine – softened
1/3 C vegetable oil
1 tsp. vanilla
2 eggs

2 ½ C flour
¼ unsweetened baking cocoa

1 tsp. baking soda

½ C buttermilk

2 C shredded zucchini

1/3 to ½ C semisweet chocolate chips

½ C chopped nuts (optional)

Heat oven to 350. Grease 13 x 9 pan with shortening or cooking spray,

Even though it seems time goes faster as we get older, I am looking forward to 2013. January I will start my fifth year writing this article, yes January 2009 was my first article. Sure doesn't seem that long ago. I've met a lot of nice people coming into the office, calling, or even writing. I want to thank each of you for your loyalty in reading my column each month.

Banana Raisin Muffins

2 C Cheerios cereal
1 ¼ C all-purpose flour
1/3 C packed brown sugar
2 ½ tsp. baking powder
1 C mashed ripe bananas (2 or 3 medium)
1 C raisins
2/3 C milk
3 T vegetable oil
1 egg- beaten

Heat oven to 400. Grease just the bottom of 12 regular size muffin cups with shortening, or spray with cooking spray.

Place cereal in resealable storage plastic bag. Seal bag and coarsely crush with rolling pin. In large bowl, mix cereal, flour, brown sugar and baking powder. Stir in remaining ingredients just until moistened – do not

lightly flour.

In large bowl, beat sugar, butter, oil, vanilla and eggs with spoon until well blended. Stir in flour, cocoa, baking soda and buttermilk until well combined. Fold in zucchini, chocolate chips and the nuts. Spread batter evenly in pan.

Bake 35 to 45 minutes or until toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Cool completely, about 1 hour. Cut into 20 pieces. If you don't have any buttermilk for this recipe, use 1 ½ tsp., vinegar or lemon juice to milk to make ½ cup.

Please see **RECIPE** on P. 9

12/12

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12/12

RECIPE cont. from P. 8

Chewy Peanut Bars

- 4 C Wheaties cereal
- 1/3 C lightly salted dry-roasted peanuts, coarsely chopped
- 1/2 C light corn syrup
- 1/3 C packed brown sugar
- 1/4 C peanut butter
- 3 T semisweet chocolate chips

Spray 9 inch square pan with cooking spray. In large bowl, mix cereal and peanuts. In a 2 quart saucepan, heat corn syrup, brown sugar and peanut butter to boiling over medium heat, stirring constantly. Boil and stir 1 minute. Pour over cereal mixture, stirring to coat entire mixture. Press in pan, using your fingers. If mix is too sticky, dampen your fingers with water.

In a small microwaveable bowl, microwave chocolate chips uncovered on high 30 seconds, stir. Continue microwaving 10 seconds at a time, stirring after each time, until smooth. Drizzle over bars. Refrigerate about 30 minutes or until chocolate has hardened. Makes 16 bars.

Fruit and Nut Snack Bars Snack Mix

- 4 C Honey Nut Cheerios cereal
 - 1 C dried tropical three-fruit mix ***
 - 1/2 C sunflower nuts***
 - 1/2 C dry roasted peanuts
- Syrup**
- 3/4 C packed brown sugar
 - 1/2 C corn syrup
 - 1/4 C peanut butter
 - 1 tsp. vanilla

Spray 13x9 inch pan with cooking spray. In large bowl, mix snack mix ingredients, set aside.

In 2 quart saucepan, mix all syrup ingredients except vanilla. Heat to boiling over medium-high heat, stirring constantly. Boil 1 minute. Remove from heat, stir in vanilla. Pour syrup over snack mix, stirring until evenly coated. Press mixture firmly in pan. Cool completely at least 30 minutes. Cut into 9 rows by 4 rows, making 36 bars. Store lightly covered.

*** If you can't find the dried tropical fruit, use whatever dried fruit you like - apricots, dates, pineapple, but be sure to chop them to bite size. Same for the sunflower nuts - if you don't like them, use chopped toasted almonds, pistachios, or even cashews.

Here we are at the end of another year. Even though it seems time goes faster as we get older, I am looking forward to 2013. January I will start my fifth year writing this article, yes January 2009 was my first article. Sure doesn't seem that long ago. I've met a lot of nice people coming into the office, calling, or even writing. I want to thank each of you for your loyalty in reading my column each month. I sometimes don't even know what I'm going to write about until I sit down in front of my computer. If you have something you would like me to write about, please call me. If I'm not in the office, we have an answering machine or you can send me an e-mail, or write your info on paper and put it in the mail slot in the door. I would love to hear from you!

Hope you all have a blessed Christmas and the happiest, and best of New Years.

Talk to you next year.

12/12

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By Brenda McElroy

Got Stuff?

Chances are if you didn't have stuff before the holidays, you do now. In his essay titled, "Stuff," Paul Graham says, "Stuff used to be rare and valuable." He gives an example of the fact that his Cambridge house, built in 1876, didn't have closets in the bedrooms. Back then people's stuff fit in a chest of drawers. Can you imagine all

your stuff fitting in a chest of drawers ... or your kids' stuff?

I'm not suggesting we all adopt a minimalistic lifestyle, but I do frequently see the effects of having too much. Feelings

of overwhelm, anxiety and frustration are common. And, with the advent of the Dollar Store, these feelings are not limited to the rich. One of the antidotes to having too much is developing a realistic estimation of our stuff's worth.

The Value of an Acquisition

Graham goes on to say, "What I didn't understand was that the value of some new acquisition wasn't the difference between its retail price and what I paid for it. It was the value I derived from it. Stuff is an extremely illiquid asset. Unless you have some plan for selling that valuable thing you got so cheaply, what difference does it make what it's 'worth?' The only way you're ever going to extract any value from

it is to use it. And if you don't have any immediate use for it, you probably never will."

Earning One's Keep

As I help people de-clutter, one of my mottos is, "Everything has to earn its keep." If you're frustrated or overwhelmed with too much stuff, here are some questions to help you determine if you're stuff is earning its keep:

- Have I used this item in the past year?
- Do I have a definite use for this in the foreseeable future?
- If it's broken, is it worth fixing?
- Does this item serve a worthwhile purpose in my life?
- Do I need to keep it for legal or tax purposes?
- Is it more important to me to keep this item than to have the space it occupies?

"What I didn't understand was that the value of some new acquisition wasn't the difference between its retail price and what I paid for it. It was the value I derived from it."

- Do I love it?
- If it has sentimental value, is it something I can take a picture of to remember it by, or keep a portion of it rather than keeping the whole thing?
- Would it be difficult or expensive for me to get another one?

- Do I have more than I use or need?
- Do I really want to continue to take care of it or work around it?
- Is it enhancing or inhibiting that which I value most?

Having only what you need, use, and love is a great start to experiencing a peaceful and productive home.

You can contact Brenda McElroy to have questions answered at *Organized by Choice* (because things don't always fall into place) at P.O. Box 26152, Fresno, CA 93729, or you can email her at info@organizedbychoice.com, visit her website www.organizedbychoice.com or she can be reached by phone at 559-871-3314.

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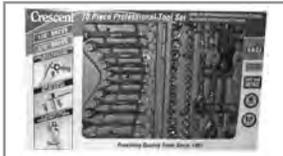
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**Pastor K. Milton Higgins is bringing
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Say you saw it in the Ranchos Independent

TEA PARTY cont. from P. 4

aware of this and have mostly refrained from further attempts.

What America needs in our current environment is not fewer guns, but more guns in the hands of trained, law-abiding citizens, the way Israel and other countries like Switzerland are handling it. A responsibly trained and responsibly armed society is a civil society. Wherever guns have been outlawed, crime has increased because only the bad guys and law enforcement have them. Google Kennesaw, Georgia for an eye opener.

Remember, an assault rifle is one that is full-auto, not one that is anything else. Do not be fooled.

Peter M. Friedman is the owner of Friedman Aviation Enterprises, an FAA Certified Repair Station. He is also an NRA Certified Pistol Instructor; NRA Certified Rifle Instructor; NRA Certified Shotgun Instructor; NRA Certified Refuse to Be a Victim Instructor; NRA Certified Chief Range Safety Officer; CAL/DOJ HSC Certificate Instructor; CAL CERT Instructor and Boy Scout Merit Badge Counselor. His website is www.FriedmanHandgunTraining.com.

Merry Christmas!

“Christmas is not a time nor a season, but a state of mind. To cherish peace and goodwill, to be plenteous in mercy, is to have the real

spirit of Christmas.”

– Calvin Coolidge

“Christmas is the time when kids tell Santa what they want and adults pay for it. Deficits are when adults tell government what they want and their kids pay for it.”

– Richard Lamm

(In 1996 Lamm, while noting that he was still a registered Democrat, criticized both his own Democrat Party and the Republican Party, saying, “I think both political parties are controlled by special interest money and I’ve had enough of it.”)

Madera Chapter Tea Party Meetings

The December meeting presented guest speaker Assemblywoman Kristin Olson, who spoke about her past two years in office and California’s future.

Meetings are held on the third Monday of each month at 6 p.m. at VFW Hall, 2026 Granada Drive, Madera. Confirm meeting dates and speakers on the Central Valley Tea Party website www.centralvalleyteaparty.com.

Comments or questions? Contact Madera Ranchos Tea Party Coordinator John Smedley by e-mail at jcsmedley@comcast.net or call him at 559-645-7031. Or contact Madera Tea Party Coordinator Rick Farinelli at richardfarinelli@sbcglobal.net or call him at 559-706-5386.








Christmas Eve - Dec. 24th @ 5:00 PM

ONE Service - Dec. 30th @ 10:00 AM

All events take place at Flipside Christian Church unless otherwise stated.
Address: 37193 Avenue 12, Madera, CA 93636 - Phone: [559] 481-6875
For more information on these events and other church activities visit our website at www.acts176.com or email info@acts176.com



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The 10th Annual Chamber

CRAB FEED



Friday, March 1 • 6 p.m.



At the beautiful DANTE CLUB No-Host Bar • Dancing • Auctions

Your \$45 ticket includes Crab, Salad, Pasta, Bread and Dessert!

Tables of 10 are available for your Business or Group. Business Sponsorships are also available. Call for info.

Proceeds go to the Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce. The Annual Crab Feed always sells out so get your tickets early!

You can get your tickets at the Chamber office, the Ranchos Independent, Ranchos Pizza Factory or the Ranchos Café.

Call the Chamber for more information. 645-4001



12/12

Welcome New Members

Ranchos Fitness & Wellness Center
Silas Ruiz & Gwint Fisher - Owners

Chamber Mixer

Ranchos Fitness & Wellness Center Mixer
Wednesday, Jan. 2 • 6 - 7:30 p.m.

Come join your neighbors as you mix and mingle with fellow Ranchos residents at the Ranchos Fitness & Wellness Center at 37167 Ave. 12 #4A in the Maywood Center. Find out about the Ranchos' new gym as you enjoy snacks and beverages. Admission is free.

Annual Crab Feed

Dante Club
Friday, March 1
6 p.m. - Midnight

The biggest event of the year is coming this March. Want to get involved? Contact the Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce at 645-4001 and ask for Crab Feed Chairman, Randy Bailey.

Your Chamber of Commerce

This information is brought to you by your Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce, representing businesses and individuals in the Madera Ranchos and beyond. Find out more about your Chamber at 37167 Ave. 12 #5C or call them at 645-4001.

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Letter to the Community

North Fork Rancheria Annual Project Update

2012 Holiday Season

Dream of 9-Year Economic Development Partnership between Madera and North Fork Tribe nears Realization.

Gaming and Hotel Resort will bring Jobs, Business Opportunity, Community Investment and Entertainment Options to Madera.

Recent Milestones

- ✓ Aug. 2012 – Governor Brown signs “Two-Part” Concurrence and Tribal-State Gaming Compact with North Fork Rancheria
- ✓ Sept. 2012 – Nearly 6,000 Individual Project Support Forms Collected
- ✓ Dec. 2012 – Department of the Interior announces Decision to Take Land into Trust for North Fork Tribe

Project Status/Next Steps

- Project has been thoroughly vetted, approved at Local, State, and Federal Levels - The Tribe’s historical Connection to Land, Local Support, and Economics Benefits are all affirmed!
- Awaiting Final Approvals to break Ground and begin Construction!
- Project to provide Millions to support other Non-Gaming Tribes Throughout California.

Lending Your Support

- Join nearly 6,000 Citizens – sign a Support Form today!
- Tell the Special Interest Groups -- “Enough is Enough! We need Jobs, Business Opportunities and Community Investment – Not More Lawsuits and Delays!”
- Send us your Questions, Suggestions, and Support to (559) 877-2461 or our Web Site and Facebook Page (see below).

Here’s to a blessed and fruitful 2013. Happy Holidays and Best Wishes.

The Tribal Council of the North Fork Rancheria
 Elaine Bethel Fink (Chair), Maryann McGovran (Vice Chair), Bonnie Hale (Secretary), Pat Beihn (At-Large)



The North Fork Rancheria is a sovereign tribal government of nearly 1,900 tribal citizens based in Madera County, CA.

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- \$350 M Construction Project
- \$100 M annually in economic Benefits
- \$45-50 M annually in Goods and Services purchased
- \$5+ M annually in Public Funding

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12/12

Building a better Madera, together!

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LHS Victorious In Mock Trials

For the first time in the school's two-year existence in the Madera County Mock Trial competition, Liberty High School came away as the champions.

Liberty defeated Minarets and Yosemite High schools Dec. 15 to win the Edward P. Moffat Madera County Mock Trial competition.

Liberty will next represent Madera County at the state competition in Riverside in March.



The Liberty High 2012 Mock Trial Champions bask in the glow of their victory and begin preparations for their statewide competition this coming March in Riverside.

"I count it to experience," adviser Mac Blate said. "We were a new team last year. Chloe Doyle, Jaycob Rousey and Andrew Hart scored us a lot of points."

Hart receive the Most Valuable Player Award and was also the most outstanding defense witness. He also received honorable mention as a prosecution witness.

Rousey was named the outstanding prosecution pretrial attorney and the outstanding defense attorney.

Alyssa Ghioldi received an honorable mention as a prosecution attorney and Clarie Copher received an honorable mention as a defense witness.

Mock Trial is a simulation of a criminal court case in which the students act as attorneys, witnesses, bailiffs and clerks.

"We worked a lot on our critical thinking skills," Blate said. "Last year, we new the script, but couldn't answer on the fly. We really understood what we are doing and that's experience."

Please see **MOCK** on P. 15

Congratulations!



LHS Football CIF Central Valley Div. V Champions

Prop. 30 Passed, Taxes are Going Up: Now What?

By LeAnn Nowlin

Many people may be thinking "Proposition 30 passed, now what are the schools going to spend the money on?"

The answer is simple: there is no new money.

When Governor Brown developed the state budget for the current fiscal year, he developed it on the belief that Prop 30 would be passed by California voters and incorporated the additional tax revenue. Because the budget was built on this assumption, if Prop 30 failed, schools were going to experience severe funding cuts

"Child Find Program" Helping the Kids of Golden Valley

The Child Find Program of Golden Valley Unified School District was created to make sure every child who has a disability receives the help they need and is not overlooked.

Anyone in the GVUSD community may participate in the Child Find process.

The program accepts referrals and screens children who may have a disability.

The child is then referred to an appropriate

over the next few years.

The passing of Prop 30 has simply eliminated the trigger on the cuts. School districts have been "flat funded" from the 2011-2012 fiscal year, meaning that, while salaries and benefits have increased, revenue limit levels are exactly the same as they were last year.

Revenue limit funds are calculated based on the average daily attendance (ADA) of the school district and is, by far, the largest revenue source for the district. The passing of Prop 30 did; however, implement a new cash flow deferral to the state's EPA or "Education Protection Account" in the amount of 21.2004 percent of the district's

total revenue limit.

According to School Services of California, the amount of the new deferral totals \$6.9 million, the amount of the anticipated revenues from the increased tax rates of Prop 30. The deferrals give the state time to receive the additional income before it becomes due to the schools. Although, schools will receive the EPA deferral as part of their June revenue payment from the state, they will have to manage through the rest of the fiscal year with less cash.

In the end, schools will receive the same amount of revenue from revenue limit sources as they did last year, they will just have to wait longer to receive it.

educational facility for evaluation or services. The assessment is provided at no cost to the parent.

A referral to the program may be made by a parent or anyone concerned about a child. Parent involvement and agreement is obtained prior to any further action and all information is confidential.

The Child Find Program is created to help children with the following disabili-

ties: autism, deafness, emotional disturbance, intellectual disability, orthopedic impairment, health impairments, a specific learning disability, speech or language impairment, traumatic brain injury or visual impairment.

For information about Child Find or to refer a child, call the GVUSD educational services at 647-7533. Information can also be found at each of the school sites.

Click on "Local News" at

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Kiwanis Korner

A Kiwanis Wish: Peace on Earth

By Perry Watkins

"Kiwanis International is a global organization of volunteers dedicated to changing the world one child one community at a time."

Peace on Earth, good will to all. That is our wish for you this holiday season.

Speaking of Good will on earth, what on Earth does Kiwanis Club of Madera Ranchos do with the funds that this community provides? Kiwanis members do fundraisers all year long, so where does all that hard work and donations from our own community end up?

We had the pleasure of completing our most recent budget planning meeting and we thought you might like to know how those funds are divided. First of all, we pay our own expenses. Club members play

games and "fine" one another dollars in our meetings. These small collections each week pay for the administrative costs of our service to the community. We pay our own dues to the International Club so that all of the funds that we collect from the community are returned to the community. Sometimes we have special fundraisers to benefit a specific cause.

We had the pleasure of deciding how to benefit the Ranchos in the coming year. We generally assist groups who have approached us in the past. People in the community approach us and attend a meeting or sometimes several meetings to tell us of their ventures, progress and adventures. We generally give some preference to established organizations that have benefited our local area in recent years. Also children's needs are always a priority. Hence our motto, "Serving the Children of the World." With International, and partnered with other organizations like UNICEF, we have helped to save the lives of literally millions of people.

Some of the groups with who we have enjoyed a relationship locally include the Boy Scouts, Valley Teen Ranch, Explorers, Local Fire Station 19, Girl Scouts, Ranchos sports teams,

Special Olympics, the Fishing Derby and 4-H programs. We also make many awards to local schools directly to children or to support school programs like Virtual Enterprise, National Leadership Forum, Torch of Excellence, Hope of America and Mustang of the Year. We give a number of scholarships each year to students of Liberty High School. We have made small contributions to support our troops, families of veterans and hospitalized veterans. All in all the Ranchos is a better place for many folks due to the efforts of service clubs like ours.

We need to put a shout out to Ollia Ridge

who once again made a completely fabulous holiday dinner party for the Kiwanis. It was amazing – wish you could have been there. Maybe next year? We so enjoy the companionship, friendship, and camaraderie of our friends at our meetings and at events

We have made small contributions to support our troops, families of veterans and hospitalized veterans. All in all the Ranchos is a better place for many folks due to the efforts of service clubs like ours.

like this one. You are welcome to attend a meeting any Thursday evening at the Pizza Factory.

Kiwanis exists solely for the purpose of making a difference in the lives of others, particularly children. We are looking for people at least 18 years old who are interested in serving the community; making new friends, and having fun with a purpose. If you are interested, contact President Marie Cameron at 559-706-1675. We meet the first Thursday of every month at 6:45 a.m. at The Coffee Spot and every Thursday thereafter at 6:30 p.m. at the Ranchos Pizza Factory. Come join us at a meeting for fun and fellowship and see what being a Kiwanian is all about.

www.ranchoskiwanis.com

Board Members:

President: Marie Cameron
Vice President: Mona Silva
Secretary: Virginia Vick
Treasurer: Perry Watkins

Board of Directors:

John Glueck, Mona Diaz, Ollia Ridge,
Debbie Farr, John Herrera

MOCK cont. from P. 14

Team members include Tyler Bird, Bethany Buchnoff, Cody Davis, Michaela Hammond, Joaquin Legaspi, David Parker, Bethan Samarin, Jordan Serpa and Cheyenne Tex. The team was helped by student-coach Liberty student Hannah Lit-

tle and attorneys Sarah Casillas and Shanna Hesketh.

"We prepared hard and scrimmaged against three other schools," Blate said. "We will work on furthering understanding what we are doing."

Blate was a member of Yosemite's Mock Trial team while he was a student.

EDITORIAL cont. from P. 5

ricane Sandy, or the growing strength and brazenness of our enemies. American voters stick their fingers in their ears and say, "Lalalalalala, I can't hear you."

It is unpleasant to think about the circumstances it will take to force Americans to grow up. It is even more unpleasant to think about Obama at the helm when those circumstances arrive.

5. Yes, there is apparently a Vagina Vote

It's the subject matter of another column in its entirety to point out, one by one, all of the inconsistencies and hypocrisies of the Democrats this year. Suffice it to say that the only "war on women" was the one waged by the Obama campaign, which sexualized and objectified women, featuring them dressed up like vulvas at the Democrat National Convention, appealing to their "lady parts," comparing voting to losing your virginity with Obama, trumpeting the thrills of destroying our children in the womb (and using our daughters in commercials to do so), and making Catholics pay for their birth control. For a significant number of women, this was appealing. It might call into question the wisdom of the Nineteenth Amendment, but for the fact that large numbers of women (largely married) used their "lady smarts" instead. Either way, Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton are rolling over in their graves.

6. It's not about giving up on "social issues"

No Republican candidate should participate in a debate or go out on the stump without thorough debate prep and a complete set of talking points that they stick to. This should start with a good grounding in biology and a reluctance to purport to know the will of God. (Thank you, Todd and Richard.)

That said, we do not hold the values we do because they garner votes. We hold the values we do because we believe that they are time-tested principles without which a civilized, free and prosperous society is not possible. We defend the unborn because we understand that a society which views some lives as expendable is capable of viewing all lives as expendable. We defend family – mothers, fathers, marriage, children – because history makes it quite clear that societies without intact families quickly descend into anarchy and barbarism, and we have plenty of proof of that in our inner cities where marriage is infrequent and unwed motherhood approaches 80%. When Roe v. Wade was decided in 1973, many thought that the abortion cause was lost. 40 years later, ultrasound technology has demonstrated the inevitable connection between science and morality. More Americans than

ever define themselves as "pro-life." What is tragic is that tens of millions of children have lost their lives while Americans figure out what should have been obvious before.

There is no "giving up" on social issues. There is only the realization that we have to fight the battle on other fronts. The truth will out in the end.

7. Obama does not have a mandate. And he does not need one.

I have to laugh – bitterly – when I read conservative pundits trying to assure us that Obama "has to know" that he does not have a mandate, and so he will have to govern from the middle. I don't know what they're smoking. Obama does not care that he does not have a mandate. He does not view himself as being elected (much less re-elected) to represent individuals. He views himself as having been re-elected to complete the "fundamental transformation" of America, the basic structure of which he despises. Expect much more of the same – largely the complete disregard of the will of half the American public, his willingness to rule by executive order, and the utter inability of another divided Congress to rein him in. Stanley Kurtz has it all laid out here.

8. The CorruptMedia is the enemy

Too strong? I don't think so. I have been watching the media try to throw elections since at least the early 1990s. In 2008 and again this year, we saw the media cravenly cover up for the incompetence and deceit of this President, while demonizing a good, honorable and decent man with lies and smears. This is on top of the daily barrage of insults that conservatives (and by that I mean the electorate, not the politicians) must endure at the hands of this arrogant bunch of elitist snobs. Bias is one thing. What we observed with Benghazi was professional malpractice and fraud. They need to go. Republicans, Libertarians and other conservatives need to be prepared to play hardball with the Pravda press from here on out. And while we are at it, to defend those journalists of whatever political stripe (Jake Tapper, Sharyl Atkisson, Eli Lake) who actually do their jobs. As well as FoxNews and talk radio. Because you can fully expect a re-elected Obama to try to reinstate the Fairness Doctrine in term 2.

9. Small business and entrepreneurs will be hurt the worst

For all the blather about "Wall Street versus Main Street," Obama's statist agenda will unquestionably benefit the biggest corporations which – as with the public sector unions – are in the best position to make campaign donations, hire lobbyists, and get special exemptions carved out from Obama's health care laws, his environmental regulations, his labor laws. It will be the

Please see **EDITORIAL** on P. 17

Area Photog Next Coffee Spot Artist

Madera Ranchos resident and business owner, Jim Quaschnick, will be the next featured artist at The Coffee Spot. Jim will be displaying photographs from his nature and wildlife collection, many of which have been photographed in the local area.

Jim is an award-winning sports and nature photographer whose work has appeared in books, magazines, calendars, posters and video games. He began his photography career over 20 years ago and is best known as the owner and head photographer of All Action Shots, a company specializing in youth sports photography. The company's high quality standards, versatility, and their ability to photograph and print at a very high volume, (over 1 million photos taken last year alone) makes All Action Shots one of the most sought after youth sports pho-

tography companies in California.

Jim's passion for photography doesn't stop at sports. His nature and wildlife photography has been a large part of his life. When asked about his nature and wildlife photography, he describes it as being similar to his sports work in many respects. "So much depends on timing, positioning, pre-planning, and the ability to capture a moment that may only last for an incredibly short amount of time," Jim said.

Jim's passion for his photography makes his collection a must see as the next featured artist at The Coffee Spot. Jim will have his photography on display Dec. 15 through January 2013. He'll be making "ready to be framed" matted prints in various sizes available for purchase at The Coffee Spot, along with other unique specialty products.





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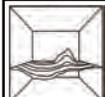
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EDITORIAL cont. from P. 16

small business, the entrepreneur, and the first-time innovators who will be crushed by their inability to compete on a level playing field.

10. *America is more polarized than ever; and this time it's personal*

I've been following politics for a long time, and it feels different this time. Not just for me. I've received messages from other conservatives who are saying the same thing: there is little to no tolerance left out there for those who are bringing this country to its knees – even when they have been our friends. It isn't just about "my guy" ver-

sus "your guy." It is my view of America versus your view of America – a crippled, hemorrhaging, debt-laden, weakened and dependent America that I want no part of and resent being foisted on me. I no longer have any patience for stupidity, blindness, or vulgarity, so with each dumb "tweet" or FB post by one of my happily lefty comrades, another one bites the dust, for me. Delete.

What does this portend for a divided Congress? I expect that Republicans will be demoralized and chastened for a short time. But I see them in a bad position. Americans in general want Congress to work together. But many do not want Obama's policies, and so Republicans who support them will be toast. Good luck, guys.

11. *It's possible that America just has to hit rock bottom*

I truly believe that most Americans who voted for Obama have no idea what they are in for. Most simply believe him when he says that all he really wants is for the rich to pay "a little bit more." So reasonable! Who could argue with that except a greedy racist?

America is on a horrific bender. Has

been for some time now. The warning signs of our fiscal profligacy and culture of lack of personal responsibility are everywhere – too many to mention. We need only look at other countries which have gone the route we are walking now to see what is in store.

For the past four years – but certainly within the past campaign season – we have tried to warn Americans. Too many refuse to listen, even when all of the events that have transpired during Obama's presidency – unemployment, economic stagnation, skyrocketing prices, the depression of the dollar, the collapse of foreign policy, Benghazi, hopelessly inept responses to natural disasters – can be tied directly to Obama's statist philosophies, and his decisions.

What that means, I fear, is that they will not see what is coming until the whole thing collapses. That is what makes me so sad today. I see the country I love headed toward its own "rock bottom," and I cannot seem to reach those who are taking it there.

Laura Hollis teaches entrepreneurship and business law. She resides in Indiana with her husband and two children.

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TOP cont. from P. 2

6 Ruptured Gas Line at LHS/April • In an attempt to get a little green, and hopefully save a lot of green, Liberty High School was in the midst of installing solar panels over a large area of the school property when a solar worker nicked a natural gas pipeline with a tractor. It created a leak that resulted in the evacuation of the school. The school got the kids out safely but it was nerve-wracking.

7 GVUSD Representation Changed/February • As the result of a lawsuit in Madera over how school board trustees were elected, Golden Valley announced that it was following suit, dividing the school district into five zones meaning that the community as a whole no longer would be voting for all of the school board representatives. Residents are *still* upset over this and continue to fume.

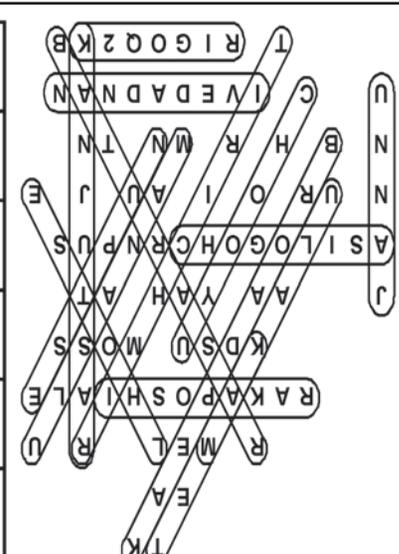
8 LHS Football on TV/September • In a first, the Liberty High School Boys' Football team was on live TV on Thursday, Sept. 13 as part of the KFRE Channel 59's weekly "Thursday Night Showdown" program for area high school teams. LHS got to beat nemesis Fowler, who kept the Hawks from winning the Division V Championship last year, and then went on to win it all Nov. 30 against Corcoran.

ANSWERS

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

SHIPMATE	CASTLES	ETHIOPIA	AMBRASSIA	ORIOLE	LEONARD	DOMESTIC	HOLDME	ARLES	WHEATLAND	ENEMY	SNOW	ORSON	ACT	EDS	CHAMBERLAIN	STORIES	ILK	OREO	SLAIN	NAGILLA	SEL	LINGTON	OFFERSONAL	ALANON	GEAR	GABEL	CLOT	ICICI	ABET	HYGIENE	PRODUCTION	CHAS	MOUTHWASH	SCHEMING	GUM	ORSON	NEON	OMAHAS	BOSNIA	TRIAL	ISON	EVA	HANT	EEL	OUR	BEYOND	BAD	BREATH	AND	BEYOND	OF	WAR	TRALEE	DONADAMS	IT	TALO	EELERS	EVE	TESTS	LAYER	DET	EST	NOSE	DIV
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9	8	+	3	÷	9
6	6	x	4	-	6
x	-	x	x	x	x
5	7	x	2	-	21



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BIRTHDAY - Just a Reminder - Diana Tucker's birthday was Dec. 19. She is still accepting lunch dates and gifts. Please call her at 381-5879. **Happy Birthday, Diana!**

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GO FIGURE! by Linda Thistle

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.

	-		x		21
x		x		-	
	-		x		12
-		+		x	
	÷		+		11
21		11		8	

2 3 4 5 6 6 7 8 9

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SUDOKU
by Linda Thistle

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

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.

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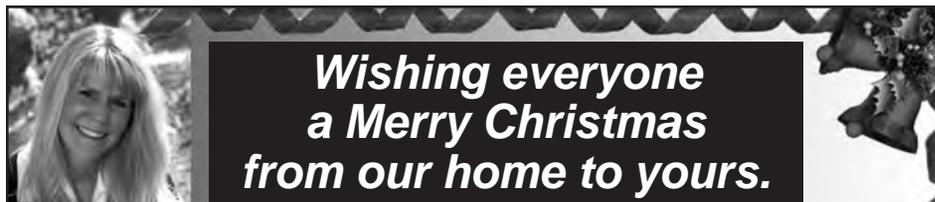
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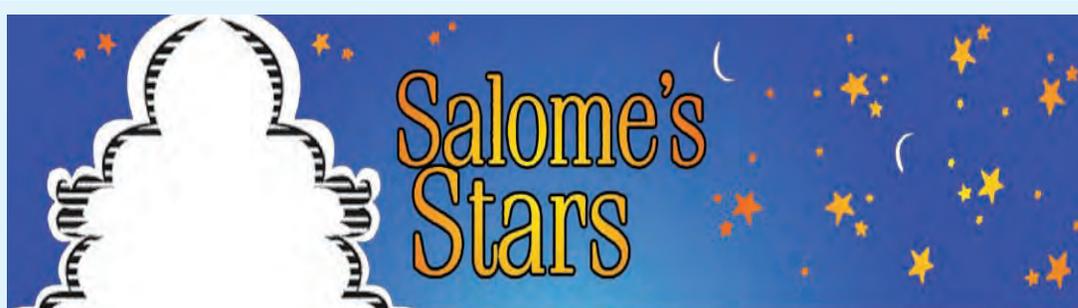
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Just Like Cats & Dogs

by Dave T. Phipps



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ARIES (March 21 to April 19) Make a start on that new workplace challenge. But get more information before you find yourself too deeply involved without knowing in which direction you should go.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20) You might find things becoming tedious as your schedule slows down for the holidays. Use this time to get information about a possible post-New Year job change.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20) The creative Twin finds outlets for her or his ideas in the early part of the week. The practical Twin takes it a step further and rallies support to turn the ideas into reality.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22) It's time to stop being intimidated by someone's negative behavior. Start taking positive steps on your own to help strengthen your position down the line.

LEO (July 23 to August 22) Look closely at that so-called golden opportunity. Best to be a cautious Cat who approaches things slowly, than one who pounces without knowing where you'll land.

VIRGO (August 23 to September 22) Your apology can resolve that personal situation before it overshadows the holidays. You'll feel better, even if you're only partly to blame for what happened.

LIBRA (September 23 to October 22) Avoid overtaxing yourself, even if your energy levels are high and you feel that you can do it all. Best to pace yourself so you won't run yourself down before the holidays.

SCORPIO (October 23 to November 21) Your sense of humor helps get you through a stressful period. Some of your quick quips can take the edge off any remaining negativity being aimed at you.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22 to December 21) Your artistic talents not only help you express yourself these days, but they also set up a line of communication between you and someone very special.

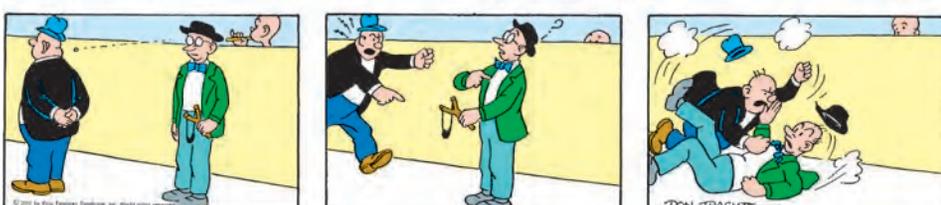
CAPRICORN (December 22 to January 19) It's fine to appreciate the importance of "proper form" for doing things. But relax a bit in order to allow newcomers on the project to feel less intimidated by you.

AQUARIUS (January 20 to February 18) Use your boundless reserve of optimism to persuade others to work with you to resolve a difficult workplace problem before it can ruin your holiday fun.

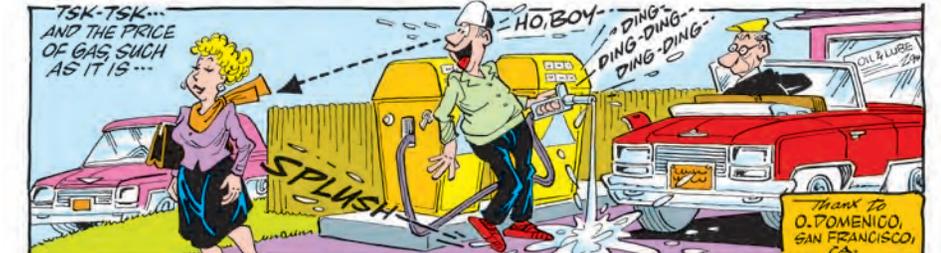
PISCES (February 19 to March 20) You brim over with self-confidence as you begin to tackle a new challenge. And, before you know it, you're not alone: Others have taken the plunge with you.

Born this Week
 You have a highly defined sense of commitment to others. You would make a fine social worker.

FUN PAGES

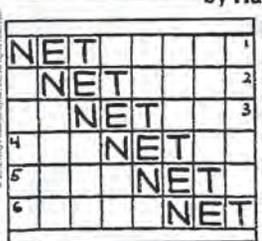


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by Hal Kaufman



CLUE-ING YOU IN ON NET RESULTS

LET'S SEE if you can identify all six stepped-off NET words in the diagram at left, is accord with the clues below.

- Definitions:**
1. ABC, CBS and NBC, for instance (pl.)
 2. Mind with a single focus (hyp. word).
 3. Marco Polo was one.
 4. Thumbnail sketch.
 5. Kitchen storage places.
 6. Global info surfing place.
- How quickly can you fill the blanks?
Time limit: Two min.



HAT STUFF! What bird is named for a hat? The fez-ant. What hat suits the queen? The reign-bonnet.

BOX SCORE! See if you can guess who gets which gift, then check through lines to see if you guessed right.

DRAW STRING! Draw three circles. Place the numbers 3, 1 and 6 within them. Now arrange the circles to form a number that is divisible by 7. How is it done?
Turn six upside down to form 931.

TRICKY NICKY! Leave it to old St. Nick to come through with an amusing party trick. It requires a sheet of paper cut part way through in two places (see right). Object is to have paper tear into three pieces with a simultaneous tug at the two sides. Alas, most times it will tear into two.
Is there a secret? Here's St. Nick's answer: Simply chomp down on the middle piece with your teeth, then yank the sides. Alakazam, three pieces ensue. Ho!

Wishing Well

6	8	6	4	2	3	4	2	7	6	7	2	3
B	M	E	B	B	C	E	E	D	F	E	F	O
7	4	2	3	2	8	6	4	2	4	6	3	6
V	A	L	N	E	A	R	L	X	E	I	T	E
2	5	6	3	8	7	5	6	3	7	6	8	5
I	F	N	R	R	O	U	D	O	T	A	I	T
3	8	2	6	4	8	2	4	6	3	4	2	4
L	T	B	S	A	A	L	D	T	B	E	E	R
8	6	7	3	7	6	3	8	5	3	5	7	5
L	R	I	U	O	A	D	B	U	G	R	N	E
6	7	6	3	7	8	7	6	3	6	5	7	5
N	T	G	E	O	L	F	E	T	R	I	A	S
8	5	8	7	5	8	7	5	7	5	7	5	7
I	B	S	R	M	I	S	I	G	L	H	Y	T

HERE IS A PLEASANT LITTLE GAME that will give you a message every day. It's a numerical puzzle designed to spell out your fortune. Count the letters in your first name. If the number of letters is 6 or more, subtract 4. If the number is less than 6, add 3. The result is your key number. Start at the upper left-hand corner and check one of your key numbers, left to right. Then read the message the letters under the checked figures give you.

MAGIC MAZE ● MOUNTAINS MORE THAN 25,000 FEET IN ELEVATION

C	T	R	P	M	K	I	F	D	T	K	B	Y	W	U
S	Q	O	M	K	I	F	D	E	A	B	Z	X	W	U
S	Q	O	N	L	R	J	M	E	L	H	F	R	D	U
C	A	Y	(R)	A	K	A	P	O	S	H	I	A	L	E
W	V	T	S	Q	K	D	S	U	P	M	O	S	S	V
J	N	L	K	A	A	I	Y	A	H	H	A	T	F	E
A	S	I	L	O	G	O	H	C	R	N	P	U	S	R
N	E	U	R	C	O	B	I	Z	A	U	Y	J	W	E
N	V	B	U	H	S	R	R	M	N	Q	T	N	P	S
U	N	M	C	L	I	V	E	D	A	D	N	A	N	T
J	I	H	F	T	E	R	I	G	O	Q	2	K	B	D

Find the listed words in the diagram. They run in all directions--forward, backward, up, down and diagonally.

- | | | | |
|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Batura Sar | Jannu | Lhotse | Nuptse |
| Broad Peak | K2 Qogir | Makalu | Rakaposhi |
| Cho Oyu | Kamet | Manaslu | Tirich Mir |
| Chogolisa | Kanjut Sar | Nanda Devi | |

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TRIVIA TEST

By Fifi Rodriguez

1. GENERAL KNOWLEDGE: What is a philigraphist?
2. TELEVISION: Which actor played the character of "Fonzie" on "Happy Days"?
3. LITERATURE: Who wrote the children's book "Matilda"?
4. GEOGRAPHY: What tiny principality lies between Spain and France?
5. MYTHOLOGY: In Greek mythology, what was the Hydra?
6. FOOD & DRINK: What is muesli?
7. ART: Where is the Uffizi museum?
8. MEASUREMENTS: What does a kelvin measure?
9. MOVIES: What spell is used to disarm opponents in the "Harry Potter" movies?
10. ANATOMY: Where is the *latissimus dorsi* muscle located on the human body?

Answers

1. Someone who collects autographs
2. Henry Winkler
3. Roald Dahl
4. Andorra
5. A many-headed monster whose heads could grow back if they were cut off
6. Breakfast cereal with fruit and nuts
7. Florence, Italy
8. Temperature
9. "Expelliarmus!"
10. Back

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Click on "Local News" at

AMBER WAVES

by Dave T. Phipps



Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas



R.F.D.

by Mike Marland



MAMA'S BOYZ

www.jerrycraft.net

JERRY CRAFT



The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



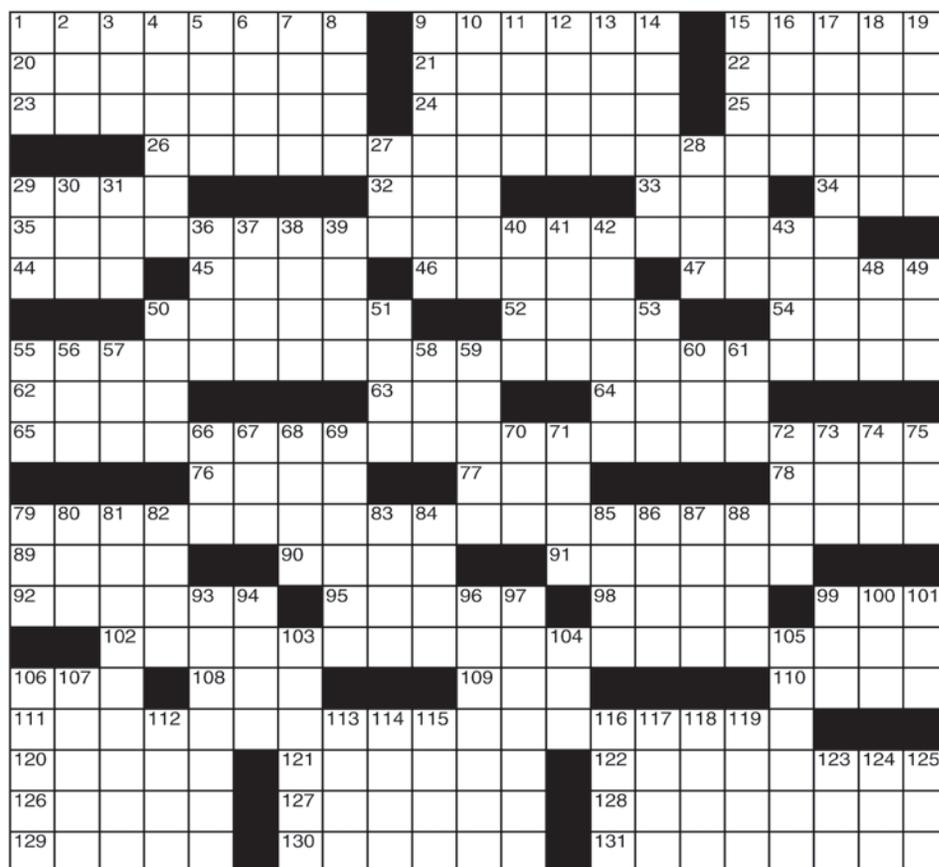
HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF



FIND AT LEAST 9 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PANELS. Differences: 1. Poster is missing. 2. Sleeve is shorter. 3. Handle is smaller. 4. Wall is shorter. 5. Locket is missing. 6. Slacks are shorter.

Super Crossword



- ACROSS**
- 1 Fellow crew member
 - 9 Social levels
 - 15 Set of morals
 - 20 Food of the gods
 - 21 Orange-and-black bird
 - 22 Hotel queen Helmsley
 - 23 Camp shelter with a rounded roof
 - 24 1982 Fleetwood Mac hit
 - 25 City on the Rhone River
 - 26 Start of a riddle
 - 29 Skiing need
 - 32 Sterile hosp. areas
 - 33 Make believe
 - 34 Mag. team
 - 35 Riddle, part 2
 - 44 Category
 - 45 Oft-dunked cookie
 - 46 Knocked off
 - 47 "Hava —" (Jewish folk song)
 - 50 12-step affiliate group
 - 52 Neutral, e.g.
 - 54 Certain Scot
 - 55 Riddle, part 3
 - 62 Congeal
 - 63 Here, to Pierre
 - 64 Help wrongly
 - 65 Riddle, part 4
 - 76 Anecdote
 - 77 Romy & Michaelis's Brian
 - 78 "— Rock" (Simon & Garfunkel hit)
 - 79 Riddle, part 5
 - 89 Guesstimate words
 - 90 Gas in lights
 - 91 Nebraska natives
 - 92 Neighbor of Croatia
 - 95 Jury's event
 - 98 "The heat —!"
 - 99 Longoria of TV
 - 102 End of the riddle
 - 106 "Gimme —!" (start of a cheer at Iowa)
 - 108 Cartoon shriek
 - 109 "— Town" "I do," e.g.
 - 111 Riddle's answer
 - 120 Part of POW
 - 121 City in southwest Ireland
 - 122 "Get Smart" star
 - 126 — -Turkish War
 - 127 Some fishers
 - 128 Optometric exams
 - 129 Paint coat
 - 130 Can't stand
 - 131 Sudden drop
 - 14 Spotted in the vicinity of
 - 15 Hyundai model
 - 16 Byte beginner
 - 17 Of detective Sherlock
 - 18 "— some advice"
 - 19 Houses, to Jorge
 - 27 Tillage tool
 - 28 Inflation subj.
 - 29 Biol. or zool.
 - 30 Bobby Orr's org.
 - 31 With 113-Down, acorn producer
 - 36 — me tangere (touch-me-not)
 - 37 Port near Algiers
 - 38 — shui
 - 39 Carrot, e.g.
 - 40 Othello's betrayer
 - 41 Gladly
 - 42 Speak sharply to
 - 43 Waffle brand
 - 48 Grassy tract
 - 49 Wholly
 - 50 High: Prefix
 - 51 Film style
 - 53 Yank rivals
 - 55 Learning loc.
 - 56 1960s TV Tarzan Ron
 - 57 Kirk's diary
 - 58 M.Sgt., e.g.
 - 59 Cube's six
 - 60 Home: Abbr.
 - 61 Erwin of early films
 - 66 King James Bible suffix
 - 67 Rural "uh-uh"
 - 68 Personal flair
 - 69 Old Spanish money
 - 70 Pa's bro
 - 71 North Pacific salmon
 - 72 Smokes
 - 73 Old witch
 - 74 — Darya River
 - 75 Singer Cooke
 - 79 Irate crowd
 - 80 Spanish gold
 - 81 Ill-fated 1940s warship
 - 82 "Sula" author Morrison
 - 83 Tooted thing
 - 84 Camelot wife
 - 85 Discharge
 - 86 Seattle loc.
 - 87 Flapjack eatery, briefly
 - 88 Mama's ma
 - 93 Not correct
 - 94 To — (perfectly)
 - 96 Penitent types
 - 97 Least soft
 - 99 Pindar's H
 - 100 Dog treater
 - 101 Eruption emission
 - 103 Did an axel
 - 104 Sky sphere
 - 105 Laid turf on
 - 106 Seething
 - 107 U.S.-Can.-Mex. pact
 - 112 Cube of hay
 - 113 See 31-Down
 - 114 Desist
 - 115 Sheltered, nautically
 - 116 Garden west of Nod
 - 117 Vary wildly
 - 118 Billfold fillers
 - 119 — the Great (kiddie-lit detective)
 - 123 "A Fool Such —"
 - 124 "Jersey Shore" ailer
 - 125 Compass dir.
- DOWN**
- 1 Doleful
 - 2 Doc bloc
 - 3 Big name in early PCs
 - 4 Before a big early 20th-cen. conflict
 - 5 Light-loving insect
 - 6 Cruising
 - 7 Color shade
 - 8 Scarfs down
 - 9 Accomplices
 - 10 Stimulation
 - 11 Window component
 - 12 Rundgren or Bridges
 - 13 Tickled red Muppet

Wishing You the Happiest of Holidays!

Mark Your Calendar!

SEM CU

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Monday, March 18

SEM CU REGULAR MEETING

Monday, January 21

6:30 p.m. • Ranchos Pizza Factory

12/12

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SEM CU
south east madera county united