

The Ranchos Independent

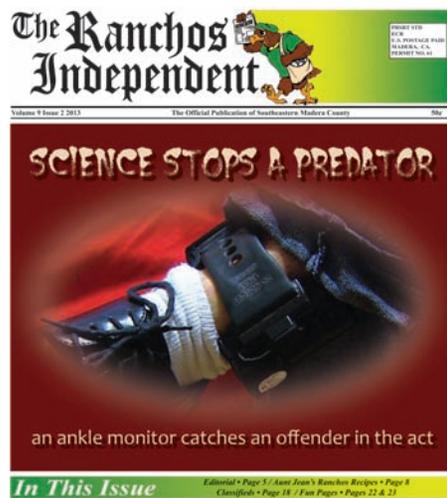


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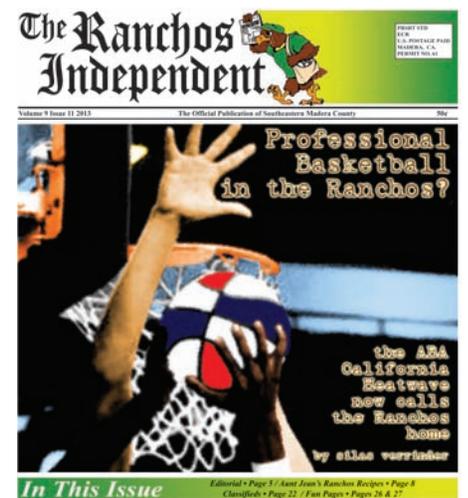
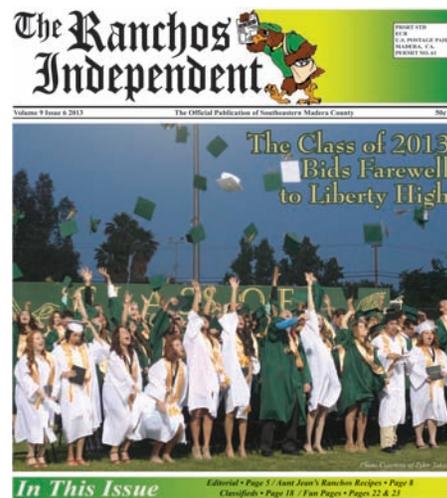
Volume 9 Issue 12 2013

The Official Publication of Southeastern Madera County

50¢



Looking Back:
Taking a look back at the top stories in the Ranchos for 2013



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Ranchos Son Living His Dream with Station 19

Station 19's Vance Killion Promoted to CAL FIRE Captain at 33

On Nov. 27, 2013, Vance Killion was promoted to CAL FIRE Captain of Station 19 as a result of 16 years of hard work and dedication. But he became a firefighter in the first place due to an opportune encounter at a video store where he had been working as a teenager.

Earlier this week, amid his full schedule and new responsibilities, and while planning to help prepare the turkey for Station 19's annual Christmas party, Killion instead graciously sat down for an interview. This was on his first "day off" after working his regular 72-hour shift and

then spending the day at an unscheduled structural fire training event. He was also planning on attending Hazardous Materials (Hazmat) training the following day.

Killion said as a kid he had a fascination with firefighters and always wanted to

be one. "When I was 17, Chuck Hoover, the Paid Call Firefighter (PCF) Captain, came into the video store and suggested I stop by," he said. And while he and a friend were visiting the station, a call came in. "Chuck invited us to follow him out, so we went to watch. It was only a grass fire, but I was hooked. I knew right then what I



Station 19's new Captain, Vance Killion, right, takes time out of his hectic schedule to talk with the Ranchos Independent's Karen Petryna about his career and how it all started at his Grandma's video store in the Ranchos.

wanted to do."

Grandson of Virginia Flick, founder of The Maywood Shopping Center and former owner of Vick's Flicks where he had fatefully met Hoover, Killion was born in Fresno and moved to the Ranchos at the

age of three. He attended Webster Elementary, graduated from Madera High School and started volunteering as a PCF at Station 19 after receiving Basic Training there when he was 18. He worked five seasons (each was a six- to nine-month stint, depending on conditions) with CAL FIRE at the Usona Fire Station, earned his Firefighter I certification at Fresno City Fire Academy, and graduated from Madera Community College with an Associate's Degree in General Fire Science.

With additional training and experience, and promotions to Engineer both in Merced and Madera, Killion qualified to get on the list for Station 19 CAL FIRE Captain by taking an online test. Based on his score and other merits, he was selected for the interview that led to the job. So he has not only achieved his dream but already risen to a position that many firefighters aspire to as the pinnacle of their career. But attaining this position at the age of 33 is not what makes this pro-

Please see SON on P. 19

Valley Obamacare Figures Released

Covered California and the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) announced that from Oct. 1 to Nov. 30, as a benefit of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare, an estimated 25,362 individuals in the Central Valley started applications for Covered California health insurance plans. The estimated total of individuals is based on an average of 1.8 individuals per application and reflects applications that were started, not necessarily completed.

Cumulatively, 6,514 individuals in the counties of San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Merced, Mariposa, Tulare, Fresno, Kings and Madera have enrolled in subsidized or non-subsidized Covered California health insurance plans, which reflects about 6

percent of the statewide enrollment (the county makes up 8 percent of those eligible for subsidies statewide). This county encompasses Covered California pricing regions 10 and 11. The total reflects approximately 800 people per county enrolling.

"The Central Valley is critically important to our success," Covered California Executive Director Peter V. Lee said. "While it is good news that so many who live in these counties have signed up, Californians all have one more week — until Dec. 23 — to enroll for coverage taking effect Jan. 1."

Last week Covered California and DHCS released statewide figures showing

Please see OBAMACARE on P. 10

LHS Hawks Div. V Champs Again

Proving that last year's Central Section Division V Championship was no fluke, the Liberty High Boys Football team went 12-1 this season and beat number two

seeded Mendota High 31-19 before a capacity home crowd on Dec. 6. The victory gave Liberty the Division V Championship for the second year in a row.

No Raise for Supes

In light of the sacrifices made by Madera County employees during difficult fiscal times, the Board of Supervisors will forego an automatic 1.4 percent salary increase.

"Our board has an obligation to lead by example," said Supervisor Max Rodriguez, Chairman of the Board. "Finances remain tight and it's simply not the right time."

Madera County Supervisors currently receive an annual salary of \$71,515. If the Board elected to take the automatic increase, their annual salary would equate to \$72,516. The automatic increase stems from County policy that ties the Supervisors' salaries to those of state Superior Court Judges. Last month, the Judicial Council of California announced that judges would receive the 1.4 percent salary increase, effective July 1, 2013.

Madera County employees have made numerous concessions to keep the County solvent and have received no cost-of-living increases as well as a 3 ½ year furlough program.

"I am hopeful that things will turn around in the future," Rodriguez said. "Until then, our Board remains committed to making the same sacrifices as our staff."

2013 • Top Ranchos Stories

from the pages of the Ranchos Independent

1 Kathleen Crumpton Allegations/May •

Allegations of laws being broken, the possibility of involvement by the District Attorney and the specter of a possible Grand Jury investigation were focused on GVUSD Trustee Kathleen Crumpton in May. An April trip to Webster Elementary resulted in a confrontation that was then published on Facebook for the world to see.

2 LAFCO - The Future of the Ranchos/March •

LAFCO, or Local Agency Formation Commission, made its way to the Ranchos in March. Since the Ranchos is an unincorporated area of Madera County, we tend to have decisions made for us by the Board of Supervisors in Madera. LAFCO is a first step toward a little self-determination that, if nothing else, at least gets our voice out there.

3 Unintended Consequences/September •

The State of California passed Proposition 215, or the *Compassionate Use Act of 1996*, to allow hurting people the right to grow and possess marijuana. But, as so often happens, what the law was intended to do and what it has become are two different things, particularly in Madera County. Massive "215 Grows" are turning up creating a nightmare for law enforcement.

4 Running for Your Life/April •

It's rare when a national or international tragedy has a connection to the Ranchos, but that's exactly what happened in April. Natalie Finley Garcia, a former resident of the Ranchos and daughter of John and Nancy Finley of CM&N Nursery, was running in the Boston Marathon on Monday, April 15, less than one hour before two bombs exploded, killing three and injuring hundreds.

5 Pro Basketball in the Ranchos/November •

OK, so it's not the Lakers, but the California Heatwave of the American Basketball Association decided to call the Ranchos and the Liberty High gymnasium home. Go figure. Their first game was a 126-125 nailbiter victory and the response from the crowd there that night was overwhelming. This is going to be fun.

Please see TOP on P. 11

Sierra View Elementary to Honor Alumni Veterans



The students and staff of Sierra View Elementary School at 16436 Paula Road are in the process of creating a memorial wall in honor of all the Sierra View alumni who have served, or are currently serving, in our United States Armed Forces. We are extremely grateful and proud of their service and wish to memorialize

them in our cafeteria by putting their name on our Honor Wall. We need the community's help in compiling a list of former students who would fit this category.

If you know of a former Sierra View Student who has served, or is currently serving, in the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, National Guard or Coast Guard, please contact Crissy McElhaney at Sierra

View School by email (cmcelhaney@gvusd.k12.ca.us) or at 645-1122. We would like to dedicate the Honor Wall on February 21 during our annual First Grade Patriotic Program, so our deadline for names is February 15. We couldn't do this without the community's help. Thank you very much for your assistance and we hope to hear from you soon.

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Letters

Dear Editor:

The federal Surface Transportation Board has turned down a request from the California High-Speed Rail Authority (HSRA) for conditional approval of the Bakersfield-to-Fresno portion of the route before completion of a final environmental report. The HSRA has since indicated that the ruling matters not and they will continue ignoring CEQA (California Environmental Quality Act), letting contracts and exercising eminent domain (theft) procedures against private properties. The voter-approved bond issue cannot now be legally floated, there are no private investors and no more federal funds. The question now is, where is the HSRA money coming from? If I were to hazard a guess, I would say somewhere in the region of your and my wallet.

Government run amuck.

Ray Krause
O'Neals

Dear Editor:

I was sad to see that the Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce had decided not to put on the annual Christmas tree lighting this year. It is an event that my family and I looked forward to every year.

After reading the article in the Ranchos Independent I understood that the purpose of the tree lighting wasn't Santa Claus. It wasn't cookies and hot chocolate. It wasn't Christmas carols by groups of children or local churches. The Christmas tree lighting has always been about forgotten veterans, all alone at the Fresno VA Hospital during the time of year when everyone else is sharing the love and company of friends and family. The Chamber of Commerce has been using the Christmas tree lighting as a means to an end; a way to get our community to chip in and remember those who gave their all for us. Unfortunately, that "chip in" had apparently gotten smaller and

smaller, to the point that, according to the article, individual members of the Chamber of Commerce were footing the bill for a greatly reduced contribution to the veterans. As a result, the Chamber made a decision that it felt it had to make this year, but left the door open for next year and the future.

My husband saw a flier at a local Ranchos business stating that a grassroots group of people, apparently loosely coordinated through Facebook, were picking up the gauntlet and were going to have a Christmas tree lighting event. As he read the flier he saw all of the elements -- Santa Claus, cookies, drinks, Christmas carols -- but something was missing. There was nothing about the veterans. Even after the article in the paper specifically said that was the reason for the cancellation, it didn't sink in. It seemed more like a group of people who were upset that little Johnny and Susie were going to be denied something *they* wanted to do as opposed to stepping in to do the right thing. I have since learned that there was a donation taken up at the event for our veterans, but it struck me as an afterthought as opposed to being the purpose of the event like it was with the Chamber.

I'm glad there was an event. I'm glad there was an effort made for our veterans. I will be interested to see how many of the grassroots people step forward to help out next year if the Chamber decides to revive the event, which I hope it does. Mostly I hope that we don't forget the reason for the season and that we impart to our children that Christmas is not all about "me, me, me," but rather about how much better it is to give than to receive, and that there are others out there that have given their all so that we can huddle together in the Ranchos on a cold December night to light a community Christmas tree.

Merry Christmas.

(Name withheld upon request)
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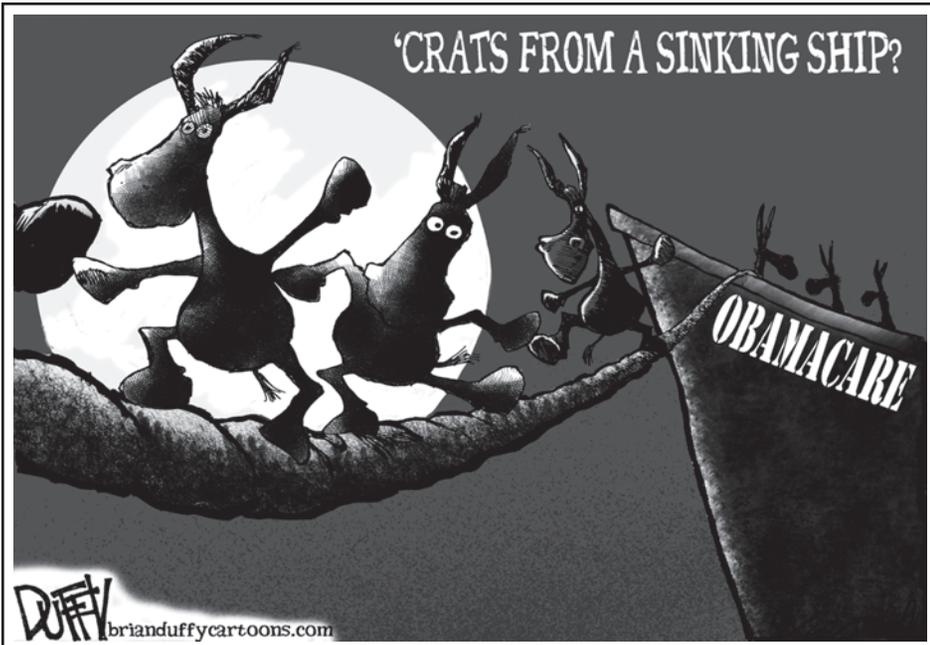
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Editorial

Another Milestone

By Randy Bailey

I've always liked December. I gravitate toward the cooler months -- I know, I live in the Ranchos where the cooler months are June and May when compared to, say, July and August -- but I'm talking about the REALLY cooler months. We've had several sub-freezing days so far this year and there was even a rumor of snow for the Hawks' Division V Football Championship, but it didn't materialize.

December is of course Christmas and all that goes with that. It's also my oldest daughter's, as well as my brother's, birthday month, so that's fun. But December has taken on a different meaning for me these last nine years here in the Ranchos. It was December of 2004 that I, along with my business partner, Kim Allison, bought the Ranchos Independent from Bill Bell. His health was in decline and he wanted to sell the paper, but he wasn't happy with the people who were coming forward and making offers. Their collective philosophies were at odds with what Bill had been building the Ranchos Independent toward and he wasn't interested in selling the paper just to sell it. I have a feeling if my partner and I hadn't come along, he possibly would have taken the paper to the grave with him that following St. Patrick's Day in 2005. Who knows?

Over those nine years there have been changes at the paper. My business partnership only lasted about another year or so after we bought the paper; today she's living happily up in Washington state, working for the government. I don't see me doing that. She was the "production" side of the paper and when she left I had to either bring someone else on to handle all of the computerized layout and art programs, or jump in with both feet and learn it. For the record, I never brought someone else in.

I did bring someone in to help with that one aspect of being self-employed that I hate: bookkeeping. My Aunt Jean is a bookkeeping whiz. She's retired from being an office manager and an independent bookkeeper and she comes in for a few hours a day whenever she wants and I don't know what I'd do without her. She and my other aunt, Aunt Maxine, are the reigning great family cooks and a few years ago Aunt Jean said she'd like to try writing a monthly column about cooking and family recipes and Aunt Jean's Ranchos Recipes was born. And can you guess what's the most popular column in the Ranchos Independent? I thought for sure it was my hard-hitting, conservative editorials ... uh, not so much. I get more feedback about Ranchos Recipes than anything else. Who knew Aunt Jean could write and would strike a chord with the Ranchos? I thank God every day that I have her.

In addition to Aunt Jean, my family has been indispensable these last nine years. Aunt Maxine helps with the paper when it's time to put the inserts in and she's my U.S. Mail connection for getting postal bins so we can send the paper out. My wife Vicki has been there since day one and she loves what the Ranchos Independent affords us: the bills get paid and I have an outlet for my opinions. I don't know which one she likes more.

And of course, there are my girls, Rachael, Lauren and Carolyn. They were 9, 11 and 13 when Dad got his paper. They have stuffed so many inserts in so many papers they could probably qualify for a union card. In nine years they have helped me with just under a half million newspapers for the Ranchos.

Wow.

Please see **EDITORIAL** on P. 8

The Ranchos Independent

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RONALD REAGAN
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The Holiday List is getting Smaller

By Audrey Stock

Hi neighbors,
2014 is almost here! I never thought I would be alive to see 2014 become realty. WOW! I am blessed. I have been very busy getting ready for the holiday season. It starts with all of the Christmas parties. Lots of fun.

I finally found my to-do list for December which I had put away last January. It sure feels good when I can cross off an item on the list. My list included: put up outside lights, put up Christmas tree and decorate tree, type Christmas letter and have it coped, address Christmas cards, wrap gifts that need to be sent, bake special Christmas goodies, shop for last minute gifts and much more.

I was sitting at the Ranchos Café visiting with four other Ranchos Hills Seniors and we started talking about how much the Senior Center has meant to each of us and our friends. Two of the ladies had lost their husbands in the last year. The Senior Center has been a place for many to reconnect to life after a loss and a reason for us to get up in the morning. The Senior Center is like an extended family to many of us. Since the Senior Center was bought by a group of Ranchos and Rolling Hills seniors we are continually working together to support our Center. At the Center we eat together, work together, and we play together. We are such a good support system for each other. I am so blessed with my exercise class at the Center. We have an exercise routine that was put together for senior exercise by a therapist. My exercise class is held on Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 10 a.m. There are about 20 seniors working to keep their bodies in shape with all of the stretching exercises. The class is free so come on over, we can always make room for one more.

The Ranchos/Hills Seniors had their beautiful Christmas on Dec. 9. This was the time that we installed the new officers for 2014. The seniors have planned a get-together to see the New Year in at the Center. There will be food and card games. Starting 2014 the seniors are planning a Community Open House on Jan. 26 to say "thank you" to all of the people who helped make the Ranchos/Hills Senior Center the success it is.

The Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce had their Christmas Party on Dec. 11. Good Luck to the Chamber for another successful year. We are all looking forward for the new Community Guide that will be out in 2014.

December was a great month for football. Congratulations to the Liberty High School Hawks. They are the winning team of Division Five. In their championship game they defeated

Mendota 31-9 in the playoff game. I also watched the Fresno State Bulldogs win their football championship game. It was a very exciting game with Utah State 17 and Fresno State 24. Fresno State won the Mountain West Conference Championship for 2013. I graduated from Fresno State in 1972.

I am so looking forward to having my family around me at Christmas. I am so Blessed. Son Bob and his wife Marta will be flying in from Hawaii soon. I want to thank all of my readers that have told me that they read my article and enjoy it. This Christmas season brings back many wonderful memories of past Christmases. It also reminds me of God's love for us all and that he sent his son Jesus to earth. Remember that Jesus is the reason for this holiday season. The Ranchos community has become my extended family and I wish you and yours a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

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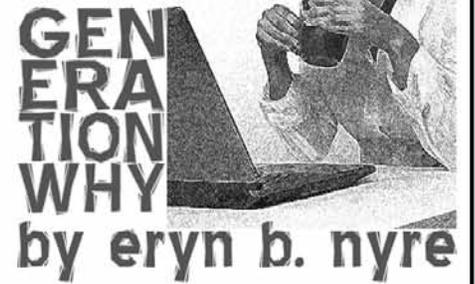
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God Bless Us, Everyone



GENERATION WHY
by **eryn b. nyre**

Like so many others, the Christmas season is my favorite time of year. The decorations, the weather and the music, it is all so magical. Sure, many people lose sight of the true sentiment of Christmas time, and for many homes it is less about the birth of our Lord and Savior and more about Santa Claus, but even for those whose Christmas isn't centered on Christ, you can see the beautiful and giving nature this season inspires, and it truly warms my heart. So with the spirit of Christmas in mind, instead of tearing apart some behavior that angers me and makes me want to go beat someone with a car antenna, this month I am going to talk about the blessings I have in my life that I am so thankful for this Christmas Season.

I am blessed with parents. They that would jump through fire for me, fly across country to be with me at a moment's notice if I needed them and have, on occasion, put a sizeable dent in their bank account for me when I have been less than brilliant with my own money. They are attentive, encouraging, loving and supportive of my dreams. I couldn't have

“... even for those whose Christmas isn't centered on Christ, you can see the beautiful and giving nature this season inspires, and it truly warms my heart. So with the spirit of Christmas in mind, instead of tearing apart some behavior that angers me and makes me want to go beat someone with a car antenna, this month I am going to talk about the blessings I have in my life that I am so thankful for this Christmas Season”

asked Santa for two better parents. Thank you, Mom and Dad, for being everything to me: my counselors, my wardens, my disciplinarians, my cheerleaders and my inspiration. I wouldn't be nearly the woman I am today if not for your love and support. I am honored to be your daughter.

I am blessed to have wonderful grandparents, most of whom have passed on now, but this time of year especially I like to reminisce about all the wonderful memories I have and all the times we spent together. My life has been enriched because of the amazing people that brought my parents into this world.

I am blessed with a kind and loving extended family. Aunts, Uncles and cousins that nurture your dreams, give you comfort and guidance and even open up their homes to you and encourage you to make it your own. Some people don't know the joy of family, they only know

pain, loneliness, turmoil and despair, but I know love, compassion and togetherness. Thank you to each and every one of you.

I am blessed with a great circle of friends. From the comedians that keep me laughing when times seem tough to the motivators that constantly push me to work a little harder, reach a little higher, be a little better each day. To the shoulders that I've cried on, the hands that I have held, the ears I have nearly talked off and the brains I have picked, I say thank you. You all mean the world to me and I cannot possibly imagine my life without you.

I am also blessed with a warm home, steady work and the opportunity to further my education. I think of those sleeping out in the cold tonight and I say a little prayer for them. Each day that I wake up is a gift from God, and no matter how difficult life may seem, with each new obstacle, each little bump in the road, I know it is making me a better person.

This Christmas season, maybe there are fewer gifts under the tree than last year or maybe there is another person in your life that was taken from you too soon. Remember what we are celebrating, the birth of our Lord and Savior, our Emmanuel. Times are tough, the walls seem to be closing in, but if we look to Him, if we keep in our hearts all that He has blessed us with, we will keep the true spirit of Christmas alive within us not only at Christmas, but everyday throughout the year.

I hope all of you have a wonderful and blessed Christmas, and May God be with you in the coming year and always.

Christmas Snacks

Aunt Jean had received more than a few requests for her article on Christmas snacks that ran last year so we have decided to run it again. This article originally appeared in the December 2012 issue of the Ranchos Independent. Only the dates at the end of the story have been updated

Editor

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.

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 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 chop- ped nuts (optional)

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

Chewy Peanut Bars

4 C Wheaties cereal
1/3 C lightly salted dry-roasted peanuts, coarsely

Please see **RECIPE** on P. 9

EDITORIAL cont. from P. 5

The advertisers you see in the Ranchos Independent make it all possible and they're only here because you, the readers, patronize them. Trust me, if no one was responding to their ads, they wouldn't be here. That means that ultimately it is you, my readers, who I thank the most. Without you there would be no column for Aunt Jean to write. There'd be no need for Aunt Maxine's postal bins. Vicki would be forced

to watch me get a job somewhere and then grumble about it (and she'd be the first one to tell you that Randy doesn't necessarily play well with others). My girls would never get their shot at handling a million papers in their lifetime (yeah, I'm not buying that one either. Once I show them the math they're probably going to announce their retirement from the family business).

Bottom line is it's been a great nine years, I thank you all and let's see how many more we can put out.

Who's got 1980's prices?



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If you have *anything* for sale call:

264-7980

We live in the Ranchos and can come to your place *or* meet you.

THANK YOU

Click on "Local News" at

RECIPE cont. from P. 8

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 microwavable 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.*

In January I will start my fifth year writing this column. 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.

Progress not Perfection

What is Christmas Really All About?

By Mike Bailey

What is Christmas all about?

If you were to ask people about the meaning of Christmas, many would sum it up in many different, but similar, ways. Christmas is about being kind and caring; about doing good and looking out for each other; and here is the big one: setting aside our differences for a while. The Bible, however, describes the meaning of Christmas in a little different way. It tells the story of Jesus coming into the world. According to the teachings of Christianity, the overwhelming point of Christmas is that it is a celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ. When Jesus was born, the event was announced as a time of "peace on earth, goodwill toward men," which sounds like the meaning of Christmas, right? If 2,014 years ago was a time of "peace on earth, goodwill toward men," what relevance, if any, does it have for us today?

Peace and goodwill are the hallmarks of friendship. But friendship is a relationship and when friends have a falling out that relationship is broken. If for some reason one or both of the sides do not honor

their part of the relationship, or possibly they feel that their expectations or their needs have been overlooked or abused. When this happens, what was once a relationship of trust can become a relationship of mistrust, fear and hostility. Two sides at war — enemies — when before they had been friends. How can this relationship be restored? On one side of war you have the aggressor (or perceived as such) and on the other you have the side that says, "Hey wait, you're overstepping. You cannot continue to do this." So, now this side uses force to show the aggressor he is doing wrong and must not repeat the actions. This usually ends up in a deadlock until one side just surrenders, and a "somewhat" peace is restored (for a little while). That peace will only last for a short time, and before long the war begins again. Why? To put it simply, the "relationship" had not been put back to what it once had been. All that had truly been done was one side had managed to subdue the other for a while. Nothing had really changed at the root of the issue. So, the relationship was patched up but not repaired. Nothing was fixed or changed;

the sides just tolerated each other for a little while. This reflects a reality at the deepest part of our being. Human beings (let's be honest) are deeply selfish and therefore want the best for themselves first and foremost. With this "default" position, the pursuit of self-interest will inevitably result in conflict. It will always produce a cycle of conflict after conflict, continually fed by selfish ambition.

The Bible tells us that, long before the birth of Jesus Christ, this selfishness first showed itself when the human race decided to disobey the God who had created them and "go it alone." Humanity's strong desire to live on its own terms broke the relationship with God and, in the words of the Bible, we "died." This was not an immediate physical death, but

an inevitable certainty of death brought on by time, decay and the effects of wrong doing, called "sin." So, having been made in God's image and destined to enjoy the friendship and care of God forever, humanity, through selfish rebellion, suddenly became dying creatures. The human race was now destined to suffer the effects of being outside the constant protection and intimate friendship of its Creator.

Jesus was given to us to fix our severed relationship with God. Not to patch it up, but to fix it. The meaning of Christmas is peace on earth and goodwill toward men – NOT just for a day, but for a lifetime. As Christians we need to celebrate the birth of Jesus every day, not just one day a year. If you have a relationship with someone that is a little on the outs, do what you have to do – sometimes tough love – to fix it. Don't just patch it up. Peace will only last if you fix it.

So, what do we do? How can we mere mortals repair all the things we have done to make that relationship broken? It's impossible!

Enter Jesus.

Enter Christmas.

More precisely, enter Jesus at Christmas time.

Jesus was given to us to fix our severed relationship with God. Not to patch it up, but to fix it. The meaning of Christmas is peace on earth and goodwill toward men – NOT just for a day, but for a lifetime. As Christians we need to celebrate the birth of Jesus every day, not just one day a year. If you have a relationship with someone that is a little on the outs, do what you have to do – sometimes tough love – to fix it. Don't just patch it up. Peace will only last if you fix it. Fixing it is hard work and changes have to be made on both sides. If you just put a patch on it you are not helping anyone.

Peace on earth forever, not for a day
 Merry Christmas,
 Mike B.

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.

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		+		+			7
7			7			14	

1 2 3 4 5 6 8 9 9

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LHS Wins Mock Trial, Heads to State

Liberty High School won the 2013-2014 Honorable Edward P. Moffat Madera County Mock Trial held on December 4, 5, and 10. Liberty High School battled Madera and Yosemite High Schools.

"It was a tough competition and we are proud of all of our teams," said Cecilia Massetti, Madera County Superintendent of Schools. "Students learned so much about the court system through this experience."

Liberty High School will represent Madera County at the state competition March 21-23 in San Jose. Team members include Makenna Avakian, Tyler Bird, Claire Copher, Alyssa Ghioldi, Michaela Hammond, Corey Jackson, Jesus Medrano, Carissa Miller, Vivian Montijo, Bethany Samarin, Michael Sassano, Jordan Serpa, Sarah Smart,

Samantha Smith, Vianey Vasquez Guerrero and Gloria Zarate. The team is coached by Mac Blate and the assistant coaches are Jaycob Rousey and Chelsea Ruland.

During the fictional case, *People vs. Concha*, Rae Concha was tried for second degree murder and possession for sale of a controlled substance (amphetamine in the form of prescription Adderall).

The Mock Trial is a simulation of a criminal court case in which the students act as attorneys, witnesses, bailiffs and clerks. Attorneys from throughout the valley score the students' performance.

This was Liberty High School's fourth year participating and second win.

California Rights Foundation provided the trial cases.

Tree Lighting Held, VA Cash Raised

A group of citizens of the Ranchos put together a last-minute Christmas tree lighting to fill the void created by the Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce's decision to not sponsor one this year.

Held at the parking lot of Hurst Hardware on Saturday, Dec. 7, it was reported to have been well-attended by Ranchos neighbors and featured Santa

Claus, cookies, beverages, games for the children and Christmas carols. In keeping with the spirit of the Chamber-sponsored tree lighting, which was to generate donations for veterans at the VA Hospital in Fresno, donations were accepted and organizer Katie Harr presented a check for \$238.89 to Chamber treasurer Virginia Vick.

OBAMACARE cont. from P. 2

that applications were started for an estimated 777,000 individuals between Oct. 1 and Nov. 30. Of those started applications, 109,296 individuals actually enrolled in Covered California health insurance plans. For the same period, 179,000 were determined to be likely eligible for Medi-Cal.

Dec. 23 is the deadline for consumers to enroll for health insurance coverage tak-

ing effect Jan. 1, 2014, but Lee pointed out that consumers can continue enrolling in Covered California plans through March 31, 2014. Medi-Cal enrollment is continuous throughout the year.

Consumers can find the nearest in-person help on CoveredCA.com. Additionally, self-enrollment is available online, and enrollment can be completed over the phone by calling Covered California's Service Center at (800) 300-1506.

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A THANK YOU FROM RAY KRAUSE

To all of the stakeholders in The Ranchos, Rolling Hills, Hidden Lake, Bonadelle North, Continental Estates and Sumner Hill neighborhoods who have kindly pledged their support of my candidacy for Madera County District One Supervisor in 2014.

Have a wide-eyed and wonderful Merry Christmas !

Paid for by Krause for Supervisor 2014 FPPC# 1359463

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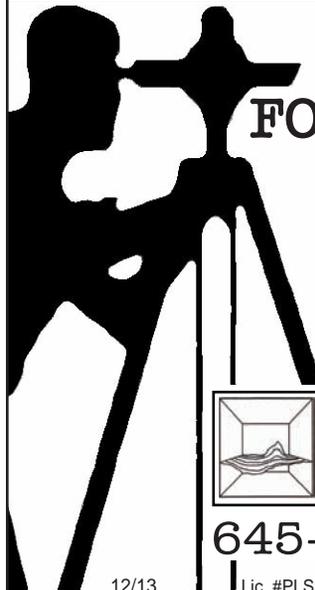
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12/13

Golden Valley Baptist Church

Sunday Service

December 22, 2013 at 10:30 a.m.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

December 24, 2013 at 6:30 p.m.

Merry Christmas to the Ranchos and Beyond



Mansel Trimble is the pastor at Golden Valley Baptist Church. Come say "hello" to Mansel.

Sunday School 9 a.m. • Sunday Worship Service 10:30 a.m.

12414 Road 37 • Madera Ranchos • 559-645-1700

12/13

TOP cont. from P. 2

6 Christmas Tree Lighting Cancelled/November • An annual tradition came to an abrupt halt when the Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce announced that it was not going to hold the annual Christmas tree lighting at Maywood Center. The reason given was lack of community involvement, in particular the lack of support for gathering items for veterans at the VA Hospital, the reason the tree lighting began.

7 Meth/Scrap Trail Leads to Ranchos/February • In this case, criminals were stealing items from the area and then taking them to recycling facilities, selling the items for scrap. One of the victims was at the recycling yard when he saw some of his own property. The trail led back to a rental on Manon Ave. in the Ranchos where deputies found, "... meth, marijuana, drug paraphernalia and cash."

8 Falling from the Sky/July • As part of GVUSD's on-going modernization for our schools, in July Sierra View Elementary got a new administration building. What made it so interesting was that the unit was already built and was lowered into place by a massive crane, making it look like the building was falling into place, right out of the sky. The only thing missing was the Wicked Witch of the West making a wrong turn.

9 Going to the Dogs/January • The Ranchos, with its large lots and country like feel, is a natural place for people to want to own pets, most notably dogs. But in January of this last year things were getting a little out of hand. The buzz on local social media seemed to be almost non-stop about lost dogs being found and other loose canines being a danger to drivers, individuals and themselves.

10 Pay the Propane Forward/ October • Just an all-around feel-good story. Local propane company Valley Propane has an annual drawing for free propane and the family that won this year couldn't use all that they won. They asked Valley Propane if they knew of a family that was in need of propane that had maybe fallen on hard times and VP said that they did. Talk about win - win -win.

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12/13

What does it take to get a WELCOME SIGN for the Ranchos? YOU!

12/13



Design 1



Design 2



Design 3

Ranchos Eagle Scout Candidate Harrison Caetano is proposing a Welcome Sign for the Madera Ranchos and needs YOUR help.

Who: Harrison Caetano, Madera Ranchos resident, member of Boy Scout Troop 118 and an Eagle Scout candidate.

What: Two community Welcome Signs greeting travelers to the Madera Ranchos, complete with area service club signs.

Where: The two signs are planned to be placed on the north side of Avenue 12 at Road 38 for westbound cars and on the south side of Avenue 12 at Road 34 1/2 for eastbound cars.

When: The two signs are scheduled for completion by April of next year. Your input on the signs are required by December 31 of this year.

How: As an Eagle Scout service project with the help of the Ranchos Kiwanis, the project will be completed through community volunteer help and donations.

Why: The signs will serve as lasting emblems of the pride that all Madera Ranchos community members have in our home, the Ranchos.



Ranchos Boy Scout, and Eagle Scout candidate, Harrison Caetano, center, meets with two members of Madera County's Roads Department, one of the many steps necessary to place permanent Welcome Signs in the Ranchos.

What can YOU do? Please take a look at the three designs above that are being considered. What elements do you like? What elements do you dislike? Send your thoughts and suggestions to Harrison. All input received will be considered and will be instrumental in the selecting of a final design for the Ranchos Welcome Sign. If you do not have access to a computer, there will be boxes placed in area businesses for your suggestions.

Send all comments to **WelcometotheRanchos@gmail.com** no later than **December 31, 2013**

David Linn

Madera County District Attorney



Candidate for Madera County District Attorney in 2014

David Linn has built a successful law practice in Madera County with 37 years of litigation and appellate experience. David Linn is a licensed attorney and has been practicing law in California for 37 years. A veteran of the United States Navy, Linn received a Bachelor of Science Degree from Purdue University, a Master's in Business Administration from Cal State Dominguez Hills and a Juris Doctorate from Pepperdine University. Linn has served as President of the Oakhurst Community Fund and as a member of the Oakhurst Park Association; he is member of the Oakhurst Sierra Rotary, Eastern Madera County Bar Association, and the Oakhurst Chamber of Commerce. Linn and his wife Betty make their home in Oakhurst. As a former Commander in the United States Navy, David knows how to lead and earn the respect of his colleagues and build a culture of professionalism, team-work, and communication with the public.

Linn is ready to serve as Madera County's next District Attorney. As our DA, David Linn will:

- ✓ Improve morale in the District Attorney's office with leadership in the courtroom and respect in the workplace
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Paid for by David Linn for Madera District Attorney 2014
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Christmas Crunch

Today is (gulp) December 13th. I can't remember a time when my house wasn't fully decorated by this date. My daughter, Candice, came over on Sunday and helped decorate the tree. The nativity's in place, the stockings are hung, there's a fresh wreath on the door from a dear friend in Saint Ignace, Michigan, but that's about it.

As part of my coach training course, I'm learning to ask questions that help me let go of unreasonable expectations of myself, ornaments I probably won't use and even traditions that aren't going to make or break our holiday celebration.

What is most meaningful to me and my loved ones as we celebrate Christmas?

Who will notice if that third layer of ornaments doesn't make it to the tree this year?

Would a "the twins have arrived" card in April be a wiser choice for my time and resources than sending out Christmas cards right now?

Not doing it all isn't failure, it's a choice. I'm giving myself permission to let go of the less important and focus on my top priorities. I know you don't need my permission to do the same, but sometimes we need to hear that "it's OK!"

If Christmas has snuck up on you in these three weeks between Thanksgiving and December 25th, take a few minutes to prioritize and give yourself permission to not do it all and consider a few ways to simplify with the following Timely Tips:



Timely Tip #1 - Gift Wrapping

Consider purchasing one type of gift wrap and one or two colors of ribbon. It will save you time figuring out what to wrap each gift in and will create less clutter for storage.

Timely Tip #2 - Gift Giving

Rather than trying to think of unique gifts for everyone, simplify with a theme: Everyone gets movie tickets, or a scarf. If you live on our block you know you're getting pumpkin bread and Crispix cookies -- every year! Hey, if it works, stick with it. It's one less decision to make at the holidays.

Timely Tip #3 - One Size Fits All

Give the valuable gift of a peaceful and productive environment with an Organized by Choice gift certificate. See my contact information below.

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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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



12/13

Be a Crab Feed "500" Sponsor

Is your business going to the Crab Feed? For \$500 you get a table for 10, get to put your company banner up at the event, have your name listed at every table, have your table introduced at the event and be listed in the Ranchos Independent. Call 645-4001.

New Chamber Board

Pres.: Verlin Dill - VDI Services
V.P.: Don Foster - Creative Catering
Sec.: Audrey Stock
Treas.: Virginia Vick
Past Pres.: Ollia Ridge

Board Members: **3-Year:** Randy Bailey - Ranchos Independent; Lisa Haney - Haney Chiropractic; **2-Year:** Cindy Ceja - Vulcan Materials; Paula Stuart - Now & Again Thrift & Gift Shop; **1-Year:** Leann Fursman - Skin Elegance; Javier Felix - Madera Ranchos Barbershop

Community Guidebook

After a 5-year wait, the Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce is producing a **NEW** Community Guidebook. If you would like to be included in this invaluable resource that will be mailed to every Ranchos address, or if you would like more information, contact Stephanie Reeves at 559-287-0781 or call the Chamber at 645-4001.

The Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce would love to see you at our next meeting, always the second Wednesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. 37167 Ave. 12 Suite 5C. Call us at 645-4001.



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Why is School Attendance So Important at GVUSD?



Golden Valley Unified School District Superintendent, Andy Alvarado.

By Andy Alvarado

Attendance is extremely important to a child's academic success. Children are in school to learn and grow as responsible adults as well as productive citizens. The Education Code requires that children between the ages of 6-18 attend school full-time. (E.C. 48200). Parents are responsible for ensuring regular school attendance of their children. What reasons are considered appropriate for excused absence from school?

- Personal illness
- Head Lice (a student will be excused a maximum of three (3) consecutive days for head lice.)
- Quarantine under the direction of a county or city health officer
- Medical, dental, optometric, or chiropractic appointments
- Attendance at funeral services for a member of the immediate family, i.e. mother, father, grandmother, grandfather, spouse, son/son-in-law, daughter/daughter-in-law, brother, sister or any relative living in the student's immediate household. (Excused absence in this instance shall be limited to one (1) day if the service is conducted in California or three (3) days if the service is conducted out of state.)
- Jury duty
- The illness or medical appointment during school hours of a child to whom the student is the custodial parent.

Upon advance written request by the parent/guardian and the approval of the principal or designee, justifiable personal reasons including but not limited to:

- Appearance in court
- Observance of a holiday or ceremony of his/her religion
- Attendance at religious retreats for no more than four (4) hours per semester.
- Employment conference or interview.
- Attendance at a funeral service for a person other than a member of the student's immediate family.

- Service as a member of a precinct board for an election pursuant to Elections Code 12302.

- Participation in religious instruction or exercises in accordance with District policy.

In these circumstances:

- The student shall attend at least the minimum school day. (E.C. 46014) and/ or
- The student shall be excused for this purpose on no more than four (4) school days per month. (E.C. 46014)

What is the legal definition of a truant student? A student who has been reported as truant and who is again absent from school without a valid excuse one or more days or tardy on one or more days. (Amend. Stats. 1976, Ch. 1010)

What is an habitual truant? A student is deemed a habitual truant when he or she has been reported as a truant three or more times per school year. The school district must make a conscientious effort to hold at least one conference with a parent or guardian of the student and the student himself, after the filing of reports (Section 48260 or Section 48261. (Amend. Stats. 1976, Ch. 1010) E.C. 48262)

Truancy letters are sent to parents informing them that their child has reached three (3) or six (6) unexcused absences. This is a district-wide procedure that takes place at the end of an attendance period. The truancy notification letters are based on the attendance information that is entered in the district computer system. This information is based on the explanation provided by the parent for their child's absence. (E.C. 48260.5)

(Example: Parent calls and states that she is planning to take Jennifer on a family

vacation for three days. The parent requests Jennifer's homework and Jennifer returns the homework when she returns from vacation. Will this parent receive a truancy letter? Yes!)

Although the district encourages parents to spend quality time with their children, the Education Code does not recognize a family vacation as an excused absence. The district recommends planning family trips when school is not in session. If that is not possible, we strongly suggest utilizing Short-Term Independent Study.

What is SARB (Student Attendance Review Board)? The purpose of SARB is to enforce the compulsory laws and to divert students with school attendance or behavior problems FROM the juvenile justice system. In 1974, the Legislature enacted Education Code Section 48320 to enhance the enforcement of compulsory attendance laws. This legislation made way for the establishment of SARB that became operative in 1975. GVUSD utilizes SARB to provide coordinated services between the school, community agencies and the home, in an effort to resolve attendance problems. If a parent, guardian or caregiver fails to respond to the directives of the SARB Board or refuses the services provided, the district is left with no alternative but to file a criminal complaint against a parent.

At GVUSD, the department of Student Services oversees Child Welfare and attendance programs. Please contact the Director of Student Services Kuljeet Mann if you have any additional questions or concerns regarding attendance or trancies at kmann@gvusd.k12.ca.us or by calling 559-645-3580.

GVUSD Kid Pix



Sierra View second grader William Jackson, center, holds a plaque given to him from the Madera County Food Bank director Ryan McWherter, left, and manager Michelle Ruiz, for bringing in 700 cans of food during the school's canned food drive in November, the most cans of any school in the county.



Photos courtesy of Tyler Takeda

Ranchos Middle School held its annual play on Dec. 11 and 12 with "Better Football Through High School Chemistry." Above, "Coach" is visiting his players in the classroom to make sure they are getting their homework done. "A big thanks to Shellie Roth, the RMS drama teacher and to our parents and community volunteers who help us put on a terrific show," Principal Felipe Piedra said.

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Ranchos/Hills Senior Center Celebrating 25th Anniversary



Open House Sunday, Jan. 26, 2014 from 1 to 4 p.m.

The Ranchos/Hills Seniors Center is located at 37330 Berkshire Dr. in the Madera Ranchos. The Center provides programs and services to enhance, enrich and educate the elders of our community and to act as a community resource to elders and their families. It began with a thought over a cup of coffee by a few retirees and here we are 25 years later with an approximate membership of 120 and growing.

Join us on Sunday, Jan. 26 to celebrate our 25th Anniversary and walk through the history of the Ranchos/Hills Seniors. Any citizen 50 years of age or over is welcome to become a member and participate in programs and services provided, and to join in the many social gatherings at the Center.

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The Bookshelf

End of the Year Library Ramblings

By Kalani Torres

Tis' the season for last articles of the year, holiday hours, looking back and moving forward to the New Year.

First, let me get the business stuff out of the way. In observance of the upcoming holidays, we will be closed the following days: December 24, Christmas Eve; December 25, Christmas Day; and New Year's Day, January 1, 2014. We will be open regular hours for the rest of the month of December and January. Please always remember we have an overnight book drop at the end of the driveway off Maywood. It's been working since my last article but of course if you have any problems, give us a call and we will take care of you.

The year of 2013 hit hard and fast. This library went from three employees to one for a few months, to two – one full time and one part time. How we got there is not important; what is important is what we have gotten out of this time. I have been here a little shy of two years. I love this little library and the people that came with it. I have learned from this job, the patrons and the community. It has been one of the craziest and best learning experiences I have ever had. Here are some things I have learned this year and hope in some way it encourages you into the next year.

Lessons Learned

I have never been in charge of anything really. Not on this scale anyway. When my manger/the librarian got laid off, the first thing that ran through my head – well, after some not so nice words that I won't say – was I don't want to run this place. But by unfortunate circumstances I was going to. Not going to lie, that first week I thought about quitting. And then I decided to put on my big girl pants and get things done. First lesson I learned: Just try. How will we know if we don't get up and try?

Second lesson: Do the best you can. This year I said to myself, "You are one person, do your best." That's all you can do. In everything you do, you can only do the best you can. But don't stop at your best. Do your best and get better.

Third lesson: Ask for help. I can't express how thankful I am to have the group for support that I have. A huge "thank you" to my coworkers from Madera County Library. Thanks for taking my calls, emails and the countless questions. They are a great group of people. To my volunteers, the new ones and the ones that have been here before I was, thank you for the dozens of carts of books you have shelved; for watching the front while I go and get lunch/coffee/or use the bathroom; for keeping me company on those really quiet days. But mostly, thanks for giving your time and keeping me company on those really quiet days. Special thanks to Diane Maxfield who works part time with me and helps keep me sane. Thanks for coming out of retirement. Thanks to The Friends of the Ranchos Library for your continued support of the library as well as the support you have shown me. Lastly, a huge thanks to all the patrons and members of the community. Your support is always welcome and greatly appreciated.

So my fellow readers, I leave you with this: Have a super holiday season. Take the time to just be with people you love. Read lots of books. Stay warm. Be happy. We shall see you in 2014!

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UPS Parcel Theft Caught on Tape

The Madera County Sheriff's Office is asking for the public's help in tracking down a woman caught on tape swiping a UPS parcel in broad daylight. The crime occurred on Blanca Avenue, near Highway 145 and Road 36 in the Bonadelle Ranchos. The victim discovered the package had been swiped after reviewing surveillance footage.



In the video, a vehicle can be seen pulling into the victim's driveway and a suspect gets out of the passenger's side of the car. The suspect is described as a heavy set Caucasian female in her mid to late 20's. She appears to stand about 5

feet 6 inches tall and has blonde hair pulled back in a ponytail. In the video you can see the suspect, who is wearing a long-sleeved shirt, blue jeans and brown boots, walk up to the front door of the home and then leave carrying a UPS package. She can be seen getting into the passenger's side of what appears to be a light colored 4-door sedan.

Anyone who may have information about this theft is urged to call either the Madera County Sheriff's Office at 559-675-7770, or CRIME STOPPERS at 498-STOP.

SON cont. from P. 2

motion special to Killion. Rather, it's the place—Station 19.

In terms of what makes Station 19 unique, Killion said it was a strong company, a very close group with a really good PCF base, and added that all the volunteers have a commitment to help the community. The volunteers train between 12 and 16 hours a month and are only paid when they go on a call. Station 19 also has a Hazmat unit, which Killion is qualified for, along with two engines, a water tender, a squad with big lights, and a support vehicle, which carries food and water for the firefighters.

When asked if he would be interested in the next higher position, Chief, Killion

looked surprised. "I'm very happy to have this job," he said. "Besides, this is the highest position I can hold and still fight fires."

Today Killion resides in Madera with his wife, Lisa, and their three children: daughters, Lailha and Nikolyss, ages 8 and 5, and 19-month-old son, Eastyn. And he commands 23 PCFs at Station 19 which responds to about 600 calls a year.

Killion's goals for Station 19 include keeping a really strong PCF base with one of the best response percentages per call. He also wants to develop better pre-fire plans and get to know the local businesses and become familiarized with their structures. Station 19 doesn't have a big social media presence, since they don't really want the attention when they're taking calls. But Killion is very open to people who want to visit the station. Teachers, for example, who want to bring their classes, can call the Station's phone number, 645-1399, to make an appointment. "We're very happy to teach the kids about safety and possibly encourage some to become firefighters. After all, that's how I got started," he said.

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In Memoriam



Herbert Dean Sink

October 27, 1940 - December 3, 2013

Herbert Dean Sink passed away on Tuesday, December 3, 2013 at the age of 73. Dean was born in Columbus, Ohio to Ethelyn and Herbert Sink. He was a resident of Madera for 28 years. Dean served 20 years in the U.S. Navy including a tour of Vietnam. He was retired from Pacific Bell and NAPA Auto Parts. In 2010 Dean went back to school and earned his degree in Pharmacy Technology. Most recently, Dean was employed by the DMV in the Manchester call out center. He loved camping, cars, genealogy, horses and watching his granddaughter play soccer. Dean was known for his willingness to help and his laid-back nature.

He was an amazing man that was loved by all and will be greatly missed.

Dean was preceded in death by his parents and his younger brother, Mike. He is survived by his wife of 43 years, Lorraine Sink of Madera; his daughter Tracy Sink; his granddaughter, Kiara Sink; his sister Irene Darnell of Ohio; his sister-in-law Marilyn Carpenter; his niece Tina Jester; his nephew Keith Jester; five other nephews and two nieces; one great nephew, Jordan Jester; one great niece, Kaidynce; and one great great nephew, Cameron. He also leaves behind other family and friends. Graveside services were held Dec. 11.

Remembrances may be made to Herbert Dean Sink Memorial Foundation, c/o Employees Educational Credit Union, at your local EECU bank.

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Busy 4-H Times

Sierra Shadows 4-H has been very busy with project meetings and community service this holiday season. Members have been learning about their projects by doing hands-on activities. From rabbits and poultry to meat goats and horses, every member gains knowledge from caring for their animal to learning the anatomy of that species.

Our Community Pride project has been busy within the area. They helped at the Christmas Tree Lighting in the Madera Ranchos and our club has made blankets to donate to Madera County Victim Services. Our club also reaches out to help people in need by giving to Toys for Tots, Ronald McDonald House and donating items to a family for the Gould



Foundation.

Our December club meeting was a Christmas potluck dinner and ornament exchange. The members enjoyed the good company and fun.

Remember, Sierra Shadows 4-H meets the second Tuesday of every month at Sierra View Elementary school. If you have any questions about joining 4-H, please contact our Community Leaders, Dana Poore or Edna Rivera, who can be reached at sierrashadows4h@gmail.com.

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by Linda Thistle

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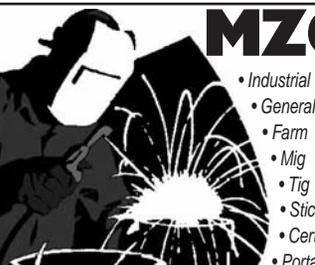
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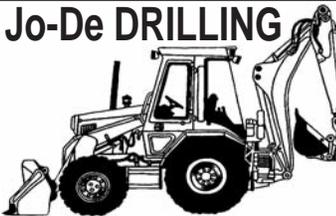
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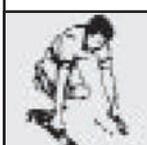
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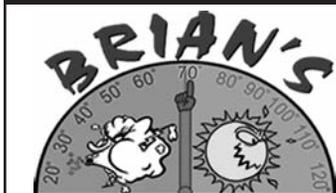
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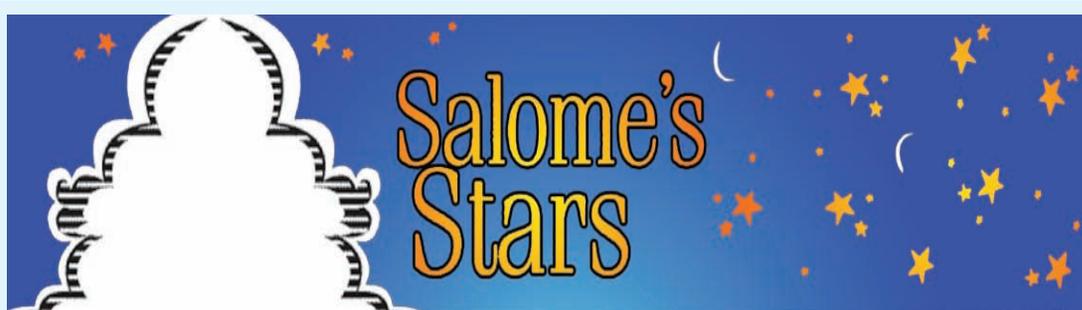
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Just Like Cats & Dogs

by Dave T. Phipps



ARIES (March 21 to April 19) Careful, Lamb. Don't let your generous nature lead to some serious overspending as you contemplate your holiday gift-giving. Your social life kicks off into high gear by week's end.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20) A positive attitude helps you weather annoying but unavoidable changes in holiday plans. Aspects favor new friendships and reinforcement of existing relationships.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20) Demands on your energy level could be much higher than usual as you prepare for the upcoming holidays. Be sure to pace yourself. Friends and family will be happy to help.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22) Don't allow a suddenly icy reaction from a friend or family member to continue without learning what caused it -- and what can be done to restore that once warm and caring relationship.

LEO (July 23 to August 22) A relationship seems to be unraveling, mostly from a lack of attention. It might be a good idea to ease up on whatever else you're doing so you can spend more time working to mend it.

VIRGO (August 23 to September 22) New facts emerge that not only help explain the recent rift with a trusted colleague, but also might provide a chance to wipe the slate clean and make a fresh start in your friendship.

LIBRA (September 23 to October 22) A family member's personal situation is, fortunately, resolved in time for you to get back into your hectic round of holiday preparations. An old friend might bring a new friend into your life.

SCORPIO (October 23 to November 21) Pace yourself in meeting holiday pressures and workplace demands to avoid winding up with a frayed temper and a Scorpian stinger that lashes out at puzzled kith, kin and colleagues.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22 to December 21) A financial matter requires close attention. Also, news from a trusted source provides the means to help sort out a long-standing state of confusion and put it into perspective.

CAPRICORN (December 22 to January 19) This is a good time to reinforce family ties. Make it a priority to assess and resolve all outstanding problems. Start the upcoming holiday season with a full measure of love.

AQUARIUS (January 20 to February 18) Don't be pressured into a so-called solid-gold investment. Wait until the holiday distractions are over. Then take a harder look at it. You might find that the "gold" is starting to flake off.

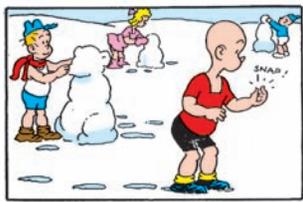
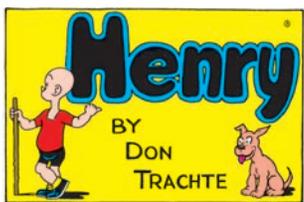
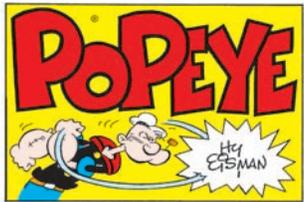
PISCES (February 19 to March 20) A former friend might be trying to heal the breach between you by using a mutual friend as an intermediary. Best advice: Keep an open mind despite any lingering bad feelings.

Born this Week

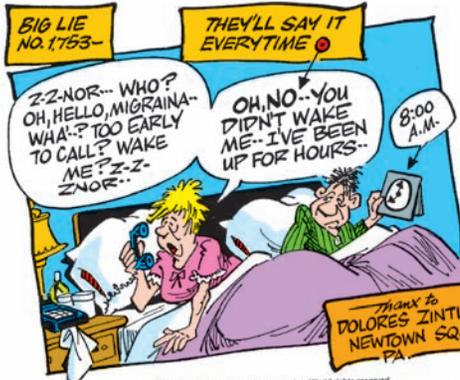
You have a way of saying the right thing at the right time. Your friendships are deep and lasting.

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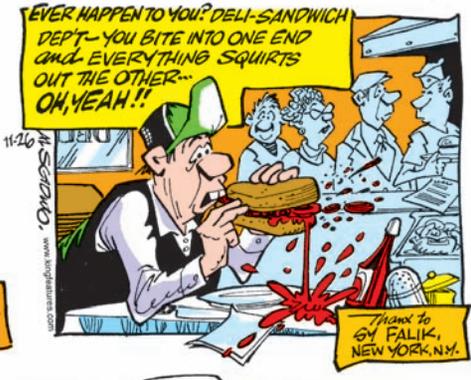
FUN PAGES



THEY'LL DO IT EVERY TIME



BY AL SCADUTO



Junior Whirl

by Hal Kaufman

WHIZ OF ODDS! Each square in the diagram at right contains an odd digit — 1, 3, 5, 7, 9. At a glance, see if you can tell which digit appears most. Then, using each amount at least twice, and moving one square at a time in any direction, see if you can find a route from square A to square B that totals 100. Do not use the same square more than once. Move only to adjacent squares up, down, across or diagonally.

A	1	7	9	3	9	7	1	9
1	3	5	7	9	1	3	7	
3	1	5	5	3	7	5	9	
1	3	9	3	5	1	7	7	
9	3	1	7	9	3	3	5	
3	5	3	5	7	1	5	7	
7	3	7	3	5	9	7	7	
9	5	9	5	7	3	5	B	

SO SUE! In three years, Sue, who has a younger brother, Lou, who's two, will be three times as old as she was three years ago. How old is Sue now?
She is six years old.

"AN" SO ON EXERCISE

FIND five progressively longer words (including proper names), each beginning with AN, to complete the word exercise above.

Definitions of words are as follows:

- "Go to the —, thou sluggard..."
- Last of the Stuart monarchs: Queen —
- Item found in a blacksmith shop.
- Partner of vegetable and mineral.
- California home of hockey's Mighty Ducks. See how quickly you can fill in the words. Time limit is two minutes. No fair peeking below.

WOOD STOCK! What is our woodsman pal doing above? To find out, draw missing lines from dot 1 to dot 2, 3, etc.



FAN FARE! Hooray for our team, and hot coffee, too. Apply the following colors: 1—Red, 2—Lt. blue, 3—Yellow, 4—Lt. brown, 5—Flesh tones, 6—Green, 7—Dk. brown, 8—Dk. blue.

SPELLBINDER

SCORE 10 points for using all the letters in the word below to form two complete words:

UNTANGLE

THEN score 2 points each for all words of four letters or more found among the letters.

Try to score at least 50 points.

Possible answers: Turn, then, then.

Wishing Well

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

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 — MOUNTAIN : CANADIAN SKI AREAS

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

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

Apex	Castle	Marble	Red
Bear	Crystal	Misery	Table
Blue	Cypress	Mystery	Tabor
Boler	Grouse	Phoenix	

TRIVIA TEST

By Fifi Rodriguez

- MUSIC: Who wrote the song "A Boy Named Sue," which was made famous by singer Johnny Cash?
- U.S. STATES: Which state's capital is Augusta?
- GENERAL KNOWLEDGE: Which fashion designer popularized the miniskirt?
- COMICS: What was L'il Abner's last name in the comic strip?
- U.S. PRESIDENTS: Who was the first president for whom women could cast a ballot?
- GEOGRAPHY: Which Canadian province lies between Alberta and Manitoba?
- ANIMAL KINGDOM: What bird is the fastest runner on land?
- SCIENCE: What was inventor Thomas Edison's middle name?
- LITERATURE: What was the pen name of William Sydney Porter?
- LANGUAGE: What kind of game is "draughts" in Great Britain?

Answers

- Shel Silverstein
- Maine
- Mary Quant
- Yokum
- Warren Harding, 1920
- Saskatchewan
- Ostrich
- Alva
- O. Henry
- Checkers

Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps



R.F.D.

by Mike Marland



Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas



The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



SCRAMBLERS

Unscramble the letters within each rectangle to form four ordinary words. Then rearrange the boxed letters to form the mystery word, which will complete the gag!

Blunt
TUBRAP

Close
BRANEY

Chase
SUPEUR

Spare
TAXER

TODAY'S WORD

"Every time I hint at getting married he says he'd like to but it involves too much work."

HOCUS-FOCUS

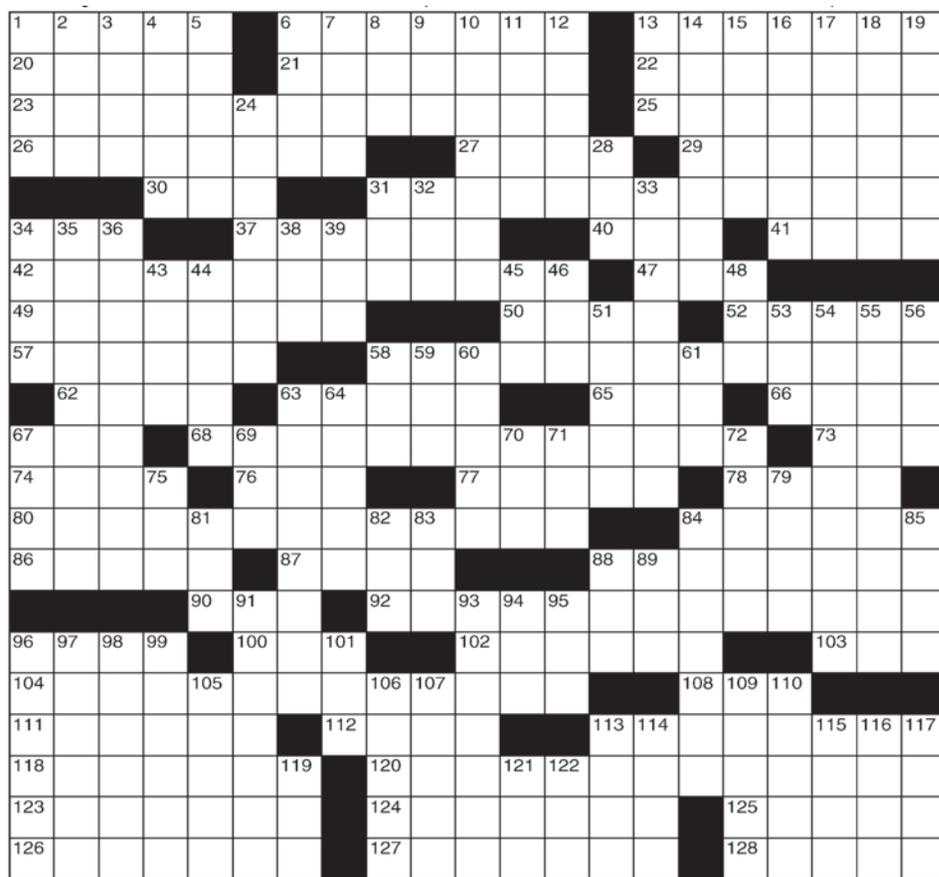
BY HENRY BOLTINOFF



CAN YOU TRUST YOUR EYES? There are at least six differences in drawing details between top and bottom panels. How quickly can you find them? Check answers with those below.

DIFFERENCES: 1. Skis are shorter. 2. Scarf is shorter. 3. Arm is shorter. 4. Goggles are missing. 5. Jacket is opened. 6. Newspaper is missing.

Super Crossword



- ACROSS**
- 1 Joe of "Raging Bull"
 - 6 Boss woman
 - 13 Gabs with flirtatiously
 - 20 Routinely
 - 21 Explorer Leif
 - 22 Carolina of fashion
 - 23 Bought brass and bronze?
 - 25 Swallow greedily
 - 26 Selected passages
 - 27 Mediocre grades
 - 29 Field marshal Erwin
 - 30 Took a chair
 - 31 Where a beautiful woman swims?
 - 34 Jay-Z hit, e.g.
 - 37 Moon of Jupiter
 - 40 Restroom, for short
 - 41 City in central Sicily
 - 42 "Alas, it's true, Ms. Bergen?"
 - 47 Autumn chill
 - 49 Dolled (up)
 - 50 Library of Congress ID
 - 52 "Hawaiian Favorites" singer
 - 57 "Yer darn —!"
 - 58 Show off parquet work?
 - 62 Ocean Spray flavor prefix
 - 63 Take — (chance it)
 - 65 Oil qty.
 - 66 "... some kind of —?"
 - 67 Ruminant's chew
 - 68 Guthrie launches a Jedi master into a somersault?
 - 73 Addenda to ltrs.
 - 74 Blind as —
 - 76 Hesiod's H
 - 77 Like Carroll's "borogoves"
 - 78 Part of TLC
 - 80 Tinkerbell's ancient milky gem?
 - 84 "The Raven" maiden
 - 86 Blasé feeling
 - 87 Yemen port
 - 88 Sugar quantity
 - 90 During each
 - 92 Maneuver to avoid a traffic jam doesn't work?
 - 96 Hot tub locales
 - 100 Succor
 - 102 Beaverlike rodent
 - 103 Driver's peg
 - 104 Inundate
 - Liotta's bucket?
 - 108 Size up from medium: Abbr.
 - 111 Actor Brando
 - 112 Big drink
 - 113 Recurring melodic fragment
 - 118 Scale ranges
 - 120 What each of this puzzle's eight longest answers is a 93-Down of
 - 123 Least nice
 - 124 Hit from behind
 - 125 Rainer of film
 - 126 Classifies
 - 127 Myopic cartoon guy
 - 128 Rocker Bob
 - 5 Prefix with red
 - 6 Pal of Ernie
 - 7 Savings plans, briefly
 - 8 Jazz poet Scott-Heron
 - 9 Cato's 1,150
 - 10 Withdrawn from people
 - 11 "True Blood" co-star Stephen Adams
 - 12 Adams of photography
 - 13 "Evita" role the Bard
 - 14 Title king for
 - 15 Strong rival of Sparta
 - 16 — l'oeil
 - 17 Homily
 - 18 Spur
 - 19 Simmered Spanish dish
 - 24 Decided to enter
 - 28 "My Gal —"
 - 31 Dandy fellow
 - 32 Gl's address
 - 33 Popular Irish ballad
 - 34 Spellbound
 - 35 Like the conga drum, ethnically
 - 36 Destine
 - 38 Manipulate
 - 39 Fishing stick
 - 43 "— girl!"
 - 44 1986 book by rocker Turner
 - 45 Sassy talk
 - 46 Big inits. in fashion
 - 48 Many a sharable PC file
 - 51 Soft as a — bottom
 - 53 Ending for Rock
 - 54 Like the United Way and NPR
 - 55 Locale-specific regulation
 - 56 Meal bits
 - 58 "What's the —?"
 - 59 Molokai or Maui: Abbr.
 - 60 Penny-pinch
 - 61 Municipal pol.
 - 63 Certain female opera solo
 - 64 Writer Dahl
 - 67 Snug eatery
 - 69 Not a bus.
 - 70 Ms. Zadora
 - 71 Size that's the opp. of 108-Across
 - 72 — clubs (certain card)
 - 75 Capote, to his buddies
 - 79 Kourmikova of the court
 - 81 Quick bark
 - 82 Berlin article
 - 83 Yoko —
 - 84 Sticking by
 - 85 In addition
 - 88 35mm camera type
 - 89 Maui paste
 - 91 Impassioned
 - 93 Letter shuffle
 - 94 Hwy. crime
 - 95 Old religious scandal inits.
 - 96 Gallery in western CA
 - 97 Sites
 - 98 Big arteries
 - 99 California county
 - 101 Bad: Prefix
 - 105 Capital of Delaware
 - 106 Bee cluster
 - 107 Pied —
 - 109 Fish parts
 - 110 Come after
 - 113 — concern
 - 114 "— I" ("Me too")
 - 115 Take — at (insult)
 - 116 Hit with a zapping gun
 - 117 — and terminator
 - 119 Aves.
 - 121 Lyric-penning Gershwin
 - 122 Tripod piece

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