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SHOT AND LEFT FOR DEAD IN THE RANCHOS



**A YOUNG DOG WAS SHOT IN BOTH OF ITS FRONT LEGS AND ONCE
IN ITS SIDE WITH BIRDSHOT, BREAKING BOTH OF ITS LEGS.**

AND THEN WAS ABANDONED. THE DOG WAS FOUND NEAR AVENUE 12. *By DJ Becker*

In This Issue

*Editorial • Page 5 / Aunt Jean's Recipes • Page 8
Classifieds • Page 16 / Fun Pages • Pages 18 & 19*

SHOT AND LEFT FOR DEAD IN THE RANCHOS



A YOUNG DOG WAS SHOT IN BOTH OF ITS FRONT LEGS AND ONCE IN ITS SIDE WITH BIRDSHOT, BREAKING BOTH OF ITS LEGS. AND THEN WAS ABANDONED. THE DOG WAS FOUND NEAR AVENUE 12. By DJ Becker

A starving, and seriously injured young dog was found just before dark on May 10, collapsed, riddled with bullet holes, and struggling to survive on a rural road just south of Avenue 12 in The Madera Ranchos. X-rays revealed the emaciated, 11-pound dog was unable to walk due to being shot repeatedly with what appeared to be birdshot, fracturing both his front legs, with another shot entering his side and both his hind quarters, and fracturing a toe. Information on the shooting incident is being sought by the Madera County Sheriff's Office.

Residents commented that the shooting incident was extremely disturbing and questioned whether the helpless dog had been used for target practice or repeatedly shot in the legs as some kind of torture or for sick amusement. Intentionally abandoning or injuring an animal is a crime and considered felony animal cruelty under California law, Penal Code 597.1, punishable by fines up to \$1,000 and up to 6 months in jail.

The Madera County Animal Shelter

had allegedly refused to accept the dog and his four other littermates from an estate caretaker on April 25, after the owner had died, according to representatives of the estate, potentially resulting in the five dogs being abandoned to fend for themselves for weeks in the area of the Madera Ranchos canal.

Social media sites NextDoor and Facebook are full of residents' complaints that the Madera County Animal Control and Services Department is not doing its job, refusing to pick up or accept the many unwanted, hungry, and collapsing stray dogs and cats found by or brought in by residents. Due to an apparent ongoing contract dispute, the Madera County animal shelter has not been accepting or limiting most animals from city residents or even city animal control officers for many months or longer. Residents claim they are being told to "chase the stray animals off their property or feed, take care of it, or handle it themselves."

The friendly dog, now named "Hot

Mess" Benny due to the severity of his many injuries, was found and picked up by Megan Bowe, of Bowe's Animal Rescue, a nonprofit dog rescue funded solely by donations in the Madera Ranchos. He was immediately taken to a veterinarian for emergency treatment. Two other starving young dogs

believed to be littermates were also found in the area and rescued by Bowe.

Both of Benny's front legs are currently splinted to stabilize the bone fractures caused by the gunshots, according to Bowe, in the hope that some of the damaged bones may begin to heal. If not, the left front leg may have to be amputated, she said. "He would not have lasted much longer out in that orchard. But he wanted to live. He's still fighting to live, so I'm not giving up on him." Bowe said.

An investigation into the circumstances of the dogs' abandonment and shooting is ongoing with the Madera County Sheriff's Department. Anyone with information on the shooting and or situation of the dog is asked to call the Madera County Sheriff's Department at 559-675-7928. The dispatch line is answered 24/7.

A GoFundMe account has been set up by Bowe's Animal Rescue to provide ongoing veterinary care for Benny and to support other injured or abused animals found in Madera.

Amy Toler, Director of Animal Services for Madera County, was contacted for a comment on the situation. She said,

"Regarding the property on Road 26, our officer has been in contact with the property owner, who is in the process of selling her late aunt's estate. Unfortunately, five dogs were left on the property, and our department was not contacted at the time. For over a year, the dogs have been cared for by a family friend and were observed by my officer to be in good health. The property owner agreed to relinquish the dogs, pay the fees, and arranged for the friend to transport them to the shelter. However, she did not inform him of the relinquishment fees. Upon learning about the fee, and after being denied payment assistance from Mr. Tice (her brother), the friend chose to leave with the dogs."

It appears there has been some misinformation shared regarding the conversations that took place between my staff and the niece, nephew, and their family friend. To be clear, at no point did any member of my team advise them to euthanize or abandon the dogs.

Despite our limited shelter capacity at the time, we made a good-faith effort to assist by offering to accept the animals through proper relinquishment. Our goal has always been, and continues to be, the welfare of the animals and clear, compassionate communication with the community.

"Smart Pay" Madera Taxes

The Madera County Treasurer-Tax Collector Announces Board Approval for Easy Smart Pay Program

The Madera County Treasurer-Tax Collector's Office is pleased to announce the launch of the Easy Smart Pay program; a new, flexible, and secure option for property owners to pay their current secured property taxes in affordable monthly installments. Approved by the Madera County Board of Supervisors on March 18, this convenient payment solution is designed to make staying current on property taxes easier by replacing large lump-sum payments with manageable monthly contributions.

"We're excited to bring Easy Smart Pay to Madera County residents" said Tracy Kennedy, Madera County Treasurer-Tax Collector. "This program provides a simple, budget-friendly way for property owners to manage their annual tax obligations. It helps them stay on track while continuing to support the essential public services our communities depend on."

The Easy Smart Pay program offers the following benefits: • Easy Enrollment – Quick and user-friendly sign-up process • Flexible Monthly Payments – Break up your annual property taxes into manageable monthly payments • Automatic Reminders – Stay on schedule with helpful payment reminders • Payment History Access – Easily track your payments through the online platform.

To enroll, this program is now available to all current secured property taxpayers and is designed to enhance the overall tax payment experience. Visit maderacounty.com/treasurer for more information.

Disclaimer: Easy Smart Pay is a privately owned and operated company that partners with County Tax Collector's offices across California to offer property tax payment options for taxpayers who do not have an impound or escrow account. Easy Smart Pay is not a lender or bank and does not provide funds to pay property taxes. The company also does not collect or store credit card information and does not sell or share personal information.



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Kiwanis Korner

Area Kiwanis Deliver Student Awards

By Sally Rowden

The Flatlander's Parade and Craft Fair was a fun event for all. From walking in the parade and handing out prizes to the children along the parade route, to visiting with community members at our Kiwanis booth made it a rewarding day. Thank you all for the community support. And thanks Katie Harr, our Kiwanis Chair, for organizing, planning and follow-through.

We also sponsored Alex's Taco Truck. Great Mexican food. If you're having an event you might want to give 'em a call. Contact them at 559-355-4725. Extremely tasty.

Several folks that stopped by our booth purchased raffle tickets for our Western Dinner Bell Raffle Tub. The winning ticket was drawn on Saturday, June 14. The individual with the matching number was Steve Tunner, who was visiting from Utah. His sister is Alma Griffen from the Bonadelle Ranchos. Enjoy that handcrafted dinner bell with all the savory accessories. Thanks go to our member Rod Chaney for his dinner bell craftsmanship.

As mentioned in last month's news article, we want to highlight all student



From left, Addyson Imperatrice, Savannah Hieger and Sienna Perez are the recipients of the Kiwanis - John Minney Liberty High School Scholarships, complete with a \$1,200 award check. Jacob Wells, recipient of the Kiwanis Hope of America Award at Ranchos Middle School stands next to Andrea Pille, Kiwanis Student Awards Chairperson.

recipients of our end-of-the-year scholarships and awards. Let's start with our Character Counts Bicycle Giveaway Awards at our three elementary schools: Sierra View, Stone Creek, and Webster. From Sierra View Elementary the recipients are Emmalyn Ives (2nd Grade) and Carson Shows (1st Grade). From Stone Creek Elementary the recipients are Juliet Macadangdang (5th Grade) and Graham Bezzerides (6th Grade). And, from Webster Elementary the recipients are Lane Elkins (Kindergarten) and Kayden Franklin (6th Grade). Each of these students demonstrated academic accomplishments, leadership, and good character as selected by each school's faculty and administration. Along with these honored achievements each student received a bicycle and helmet. Congratulations to each of you.

Next are the two Hope of America Awards presented at our Ranchos Middle School. Sophia Allen and Jacob Wells, both 8th Graders, were the recipients. The criteria to be a recipient of this award is to display leadership qualities, ethical/moral character, and academic competency. The selection committee was the Ranchos Middle School Faculty. Each recipient also received a \$100 check. Congratulations Sophia and Jacob.

Then our John Minney - Liberty High School Scholarship recipients were Savannah Hieger, Addyson Imperatrice, and Sienna Perez. The criteria for qualifying for this scholarship is based upon the student's GPA of 2.5 or above, activities in the community, a written personal essay, and two letters of recommendation. Each of these students received a \$1,200 scholarship check.

We had the pleasure of meeting each of these students and their fami-

Please see **KIWANIS** on P. 4

KIWANIS cont. from P. 3

lies as they joined us at a Meet N Greet on May 29. It was exciting to hear of their future educational plans. Savannah is headed to California State University, Fresno studying History and Political Science. Her plans are to become a history teacher. Addyson will head to the University of California, Los Angeles to study Political Science. With a goal of becoming an attorney. Then Sienna is traveling to California Polytechnic State University studying nutrition. Her goal is to become a nutritionist. Congratulations to each of

you and much success.

A huge thanks goes out to Andrea Pille, our Kiwanis Awards/Scholarship Fundraising Chair. It was a success because of her commitment to getting a job done. And, we want to thank again, the following for saying yes to Andrea: Bubba Water Truck Service, Inc., Mr. John Minney, McCaffery Homes, MGA Liquor, Pistoresi Ambulance, Prewitt Dental, S & K Mini Mart, Valley Propane, and Wight Water Pool Service and Supplies. Your giving will support a future history teacher, attorney, and nutritionist.

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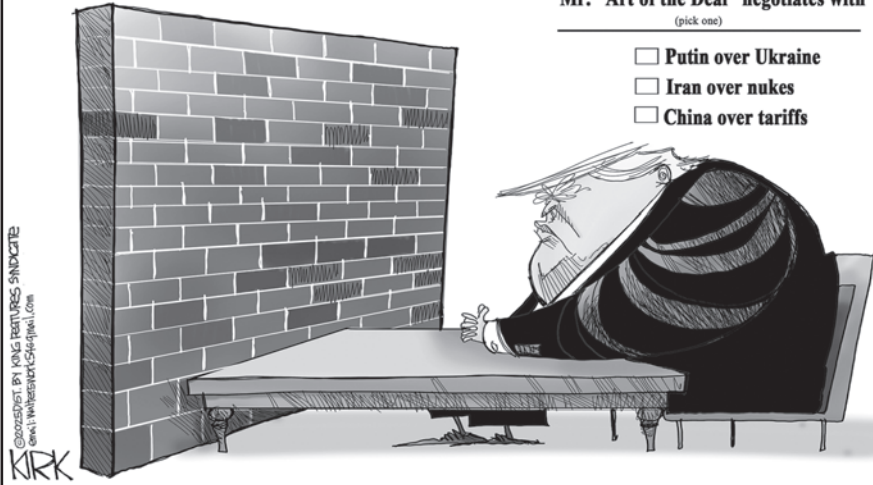
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CURRENT EVENTS QUIZ

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- ☐ Putin over Ukraine
- ☐ Iran over nukes
- ☐ China over tariffs



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Guest Editorial

The Future of Warfare is Here

By Rich Lowry

Ukraine may not have "the cards," as President Trump put it, but it does have drones. They were used to great effect over the weekend in an audacious attack within Russia that has focused the world's attention on a revolution in warfare.

A badly outmanned and outgunned country just reached far inside its adversary's territory to destroy or damage hugely expensive, nuclear-capable strategic aircraft with low-cost drones basically indistinguishable from ones available on Amazon.

It's not quite David versus Goliath, because the Russian giant is not going to be felled by the blow, but the diplomatic and psychological impact of the raid could be profound, as Ukraine seeks to demonstrate to the West its staying power.

For creativity and outsized effect with widely available devices, the Ukrainian attack is in the same league as Israel's beeper attack on Hezbollah operatives in Lebanon last year. Both operations also carry a message about new vulnerabilities -- to a compromised supply chain and to a surprise drone attack -- that should make us take notice.

We've just watched the equivalent of aviation legend Billy Mitchell's demonstration in 1921 when he had

U.S. planes sink a former German battleship, in a display of the emerging potency of air power.

Ukraine's Operation Spider Web combined Mission Impossible-style intrigue -- the drones were secreted within Russia and some of them launched from containers attached to trucks, unbeknownst to the drivers -- with clever innovation.

The attacks spanned several time zones and hit 41 Russian aircraft, according to the Ukrainians. The operation was the latest iteration of a cat-and-mouse drone war between Ukraine and Russia. The Ukraine conflict is essentially a war of attrition, yet it is anything but static, as the means of waging it change almost by the week. Offensive innovation is met with defensive countermove, triggering another change on offense.

Drones are vulnerable to electronic jamming? Then, they'll be controlled by massive spools of fiber optic cable. Drones threaten supply routes? Then, the roads will be covered with netting. And drones will be attacked by other drones. What the siren of the Stuka dive-bomber was to the Blitzkrieg -- an unmistakable herald of a new way of waging war -- the high-pitched whirr of the drone is to the Ukraine war.

Estimates are that drones now inflict about 70 percent of casualties on both sides, and there are literally millions of them. Russia deployed roughly 4 million drones last year, and Ukraine about 1.5 million. We have much to learn from all this. After last weekend, every commander of a U.S. base should be thinking anew about potential vulnerability to drone attack, and it's not hard to imagine the Chinese utilizing drones to execute a wide-ranging strike in the Western Pacific if Beijing goes after Taiwan.

Once a leader in drone technology when its Predators were taking out targets in the War on Terror, the U.S. hasn't kept up with the adaptations happening in the Ukraine war. Inevitably, our own bureaucratic processes are our worst enemy.

As head of the U.S. National Drone Association, Nathan Ecelbarger, writes, the system for acquiring drones "remains deeply flawed,

Please see **EDITORIAL** on P. 8

The Independent

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Randy Bailey.....Publisher/Editor

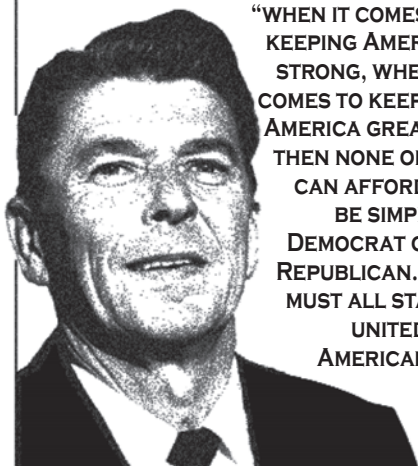
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RONALD REAGAN

SAYING MORE IN ONE QUOTE THAN OTHERS SAY IN A LIFETIME

Do I Tip Myself for Self Serve?

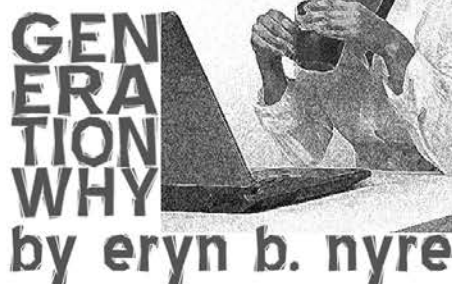
Somewhere between the invention of the self-checkout lane and the rise of the QR code menu, customer service quietly packed its bags and left the building. I must have missed the farewell party. Probably because I was on hold with an automated operator who was cheerfully unable to understand the phrase, “representative, please,” no matter how many times I shouted it into the phone.

I used to think of customer service as, well, a service. A smiling human behind a counter. A friendly voice answering the phone. A person who could take care of the situation without summoning a manager, having a math degree, or perhaps divine intervention. These days if you want help, you better be prepared to help yourself, and heaven help you if you actually need help doing that.

Take grocery stores for example. Once upon a time, there was a lane with a cashier and a bagger. Now there’s a row of soulless kiosks blinking like slot machines. I scan, bag and pay all by myself – and if I make one false move, an attendant, who’s keeping watch over all of us like that one coworker who thinks she’s your supervisor, gets summoned and stomps over like I tried to rob the place. Which I might consider if I keep doing all the work and not getting the employee discount.

Last week I’d run into the store to grab a few missing ingredients for dinner and thought I’d save time in self-checkout since the rest of the cashier-manned lines were backed up. All was going well until I couldn’t get something to scan. When I flagged the attendant down, she looked at me as though I called on her on her day off to scan an artichoke for me because I couldn’t be bothered.

Even restaurants have embraced the whole self-service model. I went into a fast-food restaurant the other day to use the bathroom and get a snack and no one was working the front counter. I stood there a minute until I realized that the employees milling around in the back weren’t going to do more than look at me funny, so I wandered to the kiosk to take my own order. I looked through the menu, only the item I wanted wasn’t there. They sold it. They had pictures of



it around the store. It just hadn’t made its way into the kiosk menu yet. I flagged someone down, explained the situation, and was met with a barely suppressed eyeroll as he had to stop what he was doing to take an order. Then he spun the screen around for me to tap my card and I was greeted with the request for a tip. A tip for taking an order with absolutely zero positive interaction. A tip for taking an order I could have placed myself had

they actually updated their kiosk software.

I’m certain that the companies are convincing themselves that they are making things easier on us. They’ve cut staff, made the customers do the work and given us more technical problems that we seem to

have to solve ourselves, all while raising prices. Somewhere in corporate headquarters there’s a whiteboard with the phrase: “How can we make the customer do everything and still feel grateful?”

Don’t get me wrong, I’m not opposed to convenience. I’m grateful for technology when it works, but we’ve reached a point where convenient means figure it out for yourself and don’t complain. And it appears the only backup plan when one of these “convenient” self-serve kiosks breaks is a surly attendant who just shrugs and says they don’t know how it works either. Which, let’s face it, is probably true because companies who go all-in on self-service don’t really put a lot of stock in proper training, either.

Here’s the other thing: taking the interactions away from the customers also affects the employees. Developing customer service skills doesn’t just include human interaction, but problem-solving,

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

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GEN WHY cont. from P. 6

conflict resolution, resourcefulness and empathy. All of which are important skills for both our professional and our private lives.

Now the customer experience seems to be measured in how few humans are involved and how many steps we're willing to take to do it ourselves. And somehow, despite all this automation, the prices keep going up and the quality keeps going down. If I'm placing the order, swiping my card, tipping at the register, fetching my own food and bussing my own table, am I the customer or the intern?

I appreciate the convenience, but I also

miss the days when you could call someone on the phone if you had a question as opposed to wading through a sea of "Frequently Asked Questions" seven clicks deep on the website. Call me old-fashioned, I suppose, but I think we can integrate automation without losing positive interaction when it calls for it. I don't mind checking myself out at a grocery store. I don't mind scanning my items and putting them into bags, but I shouldn't have to smile at myself and tell me to have a nice day. I can't do everything, and yet it appears that is exactly what is expected of me. At this point, I think the only thing I haven't done is clock in and collect a paycheck.



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Staying in My Lane

Where might I be if I ... stood on the edge of a cliff looking 1,000 feet down to the ocean, held a baby lamb, drove on the left side of crazy-narrow streets, stepped into places once occupied by kings and queens, saw a beautifully adorned manuscript of the gospels dating back over 1,200 years, and had my first taste of Guinness in a pub built in 1198. If you had guessed Ireland, you'd be correct.

What a grand time. To top it all off, our daughter, Rachel, did the research, itinerary, reservations, and 99 percent of the driving. Thank you, Rache. You did a great job staying in your lane.

Since trip planning isn't my forte, I'm going to stay in my lane and offer tips on how to prepare for a trip that's already planned.

Research — Check the weather for your destination. Even though it was May, we packed for winter and summer. We were glad we did as we were in raincoats and boots most of the time.

Do an internet search for a packing list based on your destination. Add a list of medications you need to pack. Check the hotel amenities so you know if you need a hair dryer, swim towels, etc.

Download apps for your airline, hotels, amusement parks, etc. TripIt automagically compiles your itinerary when you forward your confirmation emails so they're all in one place.

Tasks — Put a hold on your mail by visiting www.usps.com or fill out the form at the post office. Arrange care for pets and plants. Put house lights on a timer and secure valuables. Give a trusted neighbor or friend your itinerary, contact info and where to find vital info in case disaster strikes. Ensure that any bills coming due are paid prior to your departure.

Storage — Use a large plastic folder to store your trip information and resources — reservation confirmations, tickets, packing checklist, list of prescriptions, etc. You can also use the folder to collect brochures and memorabilia while away.

I'm a huge fan of packing cubes (available on Amazon). Pack each person's clothes, undies, swimwear, etc. in their own packing cubes or extra-large Ziplock bags. Label each bag with the person's name and category of items.

Use the inside of shoes to pack small items stored inside small resealable bags. Put shoes in extra-large resealable bags and place them near the wheels of the suitcase so they don't crush clothing. Pack some extra bags for wet suits, snacks, etc.

For airplane carry-ons, be sure to have liquids, gels, creams, and pastes in travel-size containers no more than 3.4 ounces each and only what will fit in one quart-size clear, zipped bag. Larger size containers must be in checked baggage.

MORE Oldies But Goodies (June 2015)

Editor's Note: With the passing of Aunt Jean, I have decided to bring you a "Best Of" of her recipes over the past 10 years. Good recipes are timeless and I hope you enjoy them all over again.

I was telling you about a cookbook Randy found for me in a thrift shop. It is *Honest American Fare* by Bert Greene, published in 1981 by Contemporary Books, Inc. Mr. Greene was a cookbook author and food columnist for the New York Daily News from 1979 until his death in 1988. It was his contention that basic American food was some of the best in the world and he put together a book of just such recipes. Let's go back 34 years and see.

I love yogurt and of course my favorite flavor is lemon. So when I saw this recipe for a lemon yogurt cake, I thought how could it not be delicious?

Lemon Yogurt Cake

- 1 C unsalted butter, softened
- 1 ½ C granulated sugar
- 4 eggs
- 1 T grated lemon rind
- L tsp. vanilla
- 2 ½ C sifted all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- ½ tsp. salt
- ½ pint unflavored yogurt
- ¾ C finely ground almonds
- ½ C lemon juice

Preheat oven to 350. Beat the butter in large bowl until light and fluffy. Slowly beat in 1 cup sugar. Beat in eggs, one at a time, and beating thoroughly after each addition. Beat in lemon rind and vanilla.

Sift the flour with baking powder, baking soda and salt. Add flour mixture to the butter in three parts, alternating with three parts yogurt. Fold in ground almonds. Pour into a buttered and floured 9 inch tube pan.

Bake cake until a toothpick inserted in center comes out clean, about 1 hour. Cool on wire rack 5 minutes.

Meanwhile, heat remaining ½ cup sugar with lemon juice in



small sauce pan until sugar dissolves. Slowly pour over cake, allowing mixture to soak in. Cool cake completely in pan before unmolding.

As I've told you in previous articles, I love potatoes – cooked just about any way you can fix them. Years ago, my Aunt Alma and I would sit in front of the radio listening to soap operas and eating raw potatoes and soda crackers. I read recently that Queen Elizabeth II of England hates potatoes – her loss!

I can remember my mom taking left over mashed potatoes and frying them for another meal. She would pat them out like little pancakes, dredge them in flour and fry them. She always used shortening to fry with. I can remember many a time getting my fingers slapped trying to steal one or just a part of one before the platter made it to the table. The following recipe is a little different take on my mom's leftover potatoes.

Pennsylvania Dutch Potato Dumplings

- 3 C cold mashed cooked potatoes
- 1 C (approximately) all-purpose flour
- 2 egg yolks
- ½ C grated Swiss or Parmesan Cheese

½ tsp. freshly grated nutmeg
¼ C butter, melted
Salt and freshly ground pepper
Heat oven to 300 degrees. Place potatoes on a floured surface or in a large bowl. Work in 1 cup flour, the egg yolks, cheese and nutmeg by hand, adding more flour, if necessary, to make soft dough. Roll into ropes about one inch in diameter. Slice into 1-inch lengths. Press ends of dumplings with the tines of a fork.

Drop dumplings 8 to 10 at a time into a large kettle of boiling salted water. Cook dumplings until they float to the top, about 2 min-

Please see **RECIPES** on P. 16

ORGANIZED cont. from P. 7

If you're like 90 percent of the population with plain black luggage, tie a brightly colored ribbon to the handle and wheel so you can identify it no matter which way it lands on the baggage carousel.

Kids — Download kids' games, shows, books on tape, etc. and don't forget the headphones and chargers. Amazon has kids' ride-on and scooter carry-ons that make changing planes mid-trip a lot easier.

Home again — Unpacking isn't fun. Unfortunately, it doesn't get more fun by putting it off. Give yourself a deadline. You're finished when travel items and empty suitcases are returned to their storage area and your clean laundry is folded and put away. Believe me, you'll be glad you did!

EDITORIAL cont. from P. 5

overly bureaucratic and resistant to innovation."

We'll have to focus more on defenses, too, from early detection to counter-drone capabilities. The problem with using missiles to defeat drones is the asymmetry in expense -- an SM-2 missile costs millions, whereas a Houthi drone costs thousands. And drone swarms could overcome a battery of missiles.

This is the reason why the work of next-generation defense firms like Epirus, which has developed a scalable, high-power microwave technology platform that can knock a swarm of drones from the sky, is so important.

What's happening in the Ukraine war is the norm in human conflict. It's adapt or watch your castle get reduced to rubble, your fleet get sent to the bottom of the ocean or a leg of your nuclear triad get assaulted by, essentially, a plaything of hobbyists.

Rich Lowry is editor of the *National Review*.

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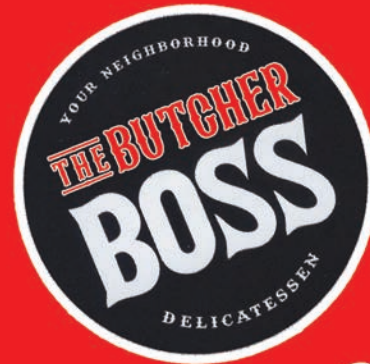
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*Do not incline my heart
to any evil thing,
to practice wicked works
with men
who work iniquity...*

PSALM 141:4



Detail of *Revolt* by Käthe Kollwitz (1897)

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- Dorothy Straight was just 4 years old when she wrote and illustrated "How the World Began" for her grandmother. It was officially published two years later.
- Worms make up the majority of a robin's diet, but it won't mind if you leave out a dessert tray as well. In fact, robins are partial to pastry dough, fruit cake and coconut cake.
- Flowers placed at a grave were originally brought to promote good will with the spirit of the deceased.
- Movie director Guillermo del Toro owns a house containing a room with an endless rainstorm projected onto all its windows and audio to match. He often uses this room to write in.
- Red hair is the thickest hair color by strand.
- Chock full o'Nuts coffee does not contain nuts. It's named for a chain of nut stores that the founder converted into coffee shops.
- On his deathbed, Steve Jobs asked for five different oxygen masks so he could choose the one with the best design.
- The silhouette on the official NBA logo is Los Angeles Lakers guard Jerry West.
- Tsutomu Yamaguchi was in Hiroshima for work when the first A-bomb hit, made it home to Nagasaki for the second, and lived to be 93.
- M&Ms were invented exclusively for American soldiers in World War II.
- Lake Hillier in Western Australia stays a striking deep pink color all year long. Some scientists believe its hue is due to high salt levels combined with a salt-loving algae, Dunaliella salina, and a pink bacteria called halobacteria.
- Tribal African tongues and other languages describe blue and green as different shades of the same color.

Thought for the Day: *"Only two things are infinite, the universe and human stupidity, and I'm not sure about the former."* -- Albert Einstein

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SEMCU speaks

By Dov Adler

An event that brought the community together

On May 17, the Flatlanders Day Parade and Craft Fair lit up the heart of Southeast Madera County, bringing together families, schools, local organizations and longtime residents for a day of celebration along Road 36 and the Liberty High School grounds in the Madera Ranchos. This year was its 31st year and the parade featured an impressive lineup of colorful floats, marching bands, classic cars, equestrian riders and community groups that proudly represented the spirit of Madera and the Ranchos. At the end

which translates into spending at local restaurants, gas stations and shops. When tourists attend even for a few hours, they often leave behind valuable dollars that support local jobs and small businesses. Other towns have seen this firsthand — Holyoke, Mass. for example — draws over 400,000 spectators to its annual St. Patrick's Day Parade, resulting in an estimated \$20 million in local economic impact. While the Madera Ranchos may not aim for that scale, the concept remains the same: with thoughtful planning, strategic promotion and a few added attractions, Flatlanders Day could become a regional draw that boosts tourism and supports the community's long-term economic vitality. Maybe next year there could be an addition of live music and a small park ride carnival for additional family activities.

Along with others, SEMCU is a non-profit organization that represents the interests of the residents, property owners and businesses in Southeastern Madera County. Its concerns, among other issues, are our community, safety, water, traffic, schools,



of the parade route a sprawling craft fair welcomed the crowds with booths of artisans, local booster clubs, local nonprofit organizations (including SEMCU), food vendors, our local law enforcement representatives, as well as our Madera County District 1 Supervisor, Jordan Wamhoff.

Organized by the Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce, the event saw a strong turnout and continues to grow each year as a cornerstone of local culture. For many, the Flatlanders Parade and Craft Fair is more than just a tradition; it's a moment that brings neighbors together and reminds us of what makes small-town life special.

But beyond its festive atmosphere, the Flatlanders Parade has the potential to offer real economic benefits to the Southeast Madera community. Events like this draw in visitors from nearby areas — Fresno, Clovis and even travelers passing through —

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

SEMCU meets once per month for about an hour at the Madera Ranchos Library at 37398 Berkshire Dr. in the Ranchos, or you may join us online to virtually participate. To join online, go to www.semcu.org for a link and simple instructions. Or if you prefer, you can call in on your cellphone at 669-900-6833 then enter the ID# 83632424343 followed with the access code 85422. Our next meeting is on Tuesday, July 15 at 6 p.m. at the Ranchos Library. Make your voice heard!

*SEMCU is "By the Community
for the Community"*

Senior Report

Seniors Enjoy Indoor Activities

By Melanie Williams

July is on our doorstep and the heat wave of summer is here. The Ranchos/Hills Senior Center is planning some fun indoor activities as the summer months are upon us.

We have Chair Yoga classes for seniors available through Camarena Health in Tesoro Viejo. If you are interested in joining other seniors for this Chair Yoga class, please call the Ranchos/Hills Senior Center at 559-645-4864 for more information.

The July Potluck is on the calendar for Thursday, July 10 at 6 p.m. Any senior from the community is welcome to attend the July Potluck. Call the Senior Center so we can set up enough tables to accommodate everyone. Call the center if you have not signed up for the free senior lunches, any weekday from 9 a.m. to 11 p.m. Senior lunch is served every weekday at 11:30 a.m., but you must sign up with Jaime for the Senior Lunch program before attending.

The Senior Exercise Class is every Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. Seniors from the community can come anytime and participate in the exercise class held at the Ranchos/Hills Senior Center.

The 30th Annual Home and Garden Festival was successful thanks to many community members and local businesses that donated auction items, gift certificates and gift baskets. Donors included Jeanette Covington, The Ranchos Crafters • El Rinconcito Mexican Grill • The Liberty Café • The Second Sons Brewery • Colleen Snyder, Local author of Christian Mysteries • Alicia Pena, Reign Beauty Studio • Jhona Pistoresi and Melissa Marino, Loves Hair Salon • Elaine, Mike's Country Clippers • Pizza Factory • Coarsegold Girl Scout Troop #4015 • Madera Ranchos Boy Scout Troop #118 and Boy Scout Leader, Ed Duarte, donated their time to help vendors set up and breakdown booths, help with transporting

plants, tables and chairs for the event.

The July Saturday Sale is cancelled because of the July 4 weekend. The next Ranchos/Hills Saturday Sale is on August 2 from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. The Senior Center is taking donations to prepare for the August Saturday Sale.

Treasure House volunteers are diligently sorting through new and used summer items donated each week for our Treasure House, Boutique and Scout Garden.

Terry Killingsworth is leading our members of the appropriately named the Ranchos/Hills Basket Cases in designing and weaving Indian pine needle baskets. The next classes are Tuesday, June 24 and Tuesday, July 29 from 9 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. You can join the Basket Cases in a fun time weaving pine needle baskets on



Judy Sears was the head planner for the very successful 30th Annual Home and Garden Festival at the Senior Center.

the last Tuesday of each month, no experience required.

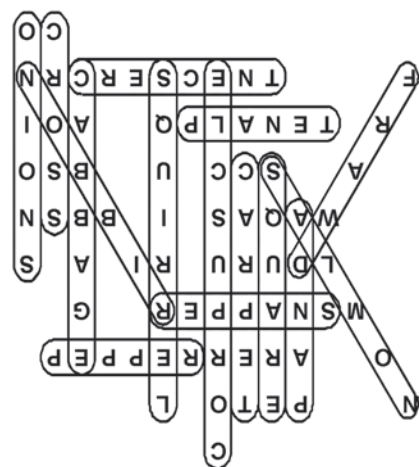
Brown Bag Day is Wednesday, July 23. Pick up your Brown Bag at the Ranchos/Hills Senior Center from 10:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. but you have to register with the Madera County Food Bank first. Applications are at the front desk. Pick up our monthly calendar filled with information at the Center. The Senior Center will be closed on Friday, July 4.

With much sympathy, we send our condolences to Rana Dhillon for the passing of her beloved husband, Pashaura. They have been active members in our exercise class, potluck nights and volunteering in the Treasure House for many years at the Ranchos/Hills Senior Center.

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RECIPES cont. from P. 8

utes. Remove with a slotted spoon and drain on paper towels. Keep warm in oven. Just before serving, pour melted butter over dumplings, sprinkle with salt and pepper.

My mom used to fix round steak and potatoes. She would salt, pepper and flour round steak cut up into serving size pieces and brown it. Then slice peeled potatoes and an onion over the top then pour in two or three cans of bouillon soup into the pan and add enough water to cover the potatoes, cover the pan and simmer for about an hour until the meat was done. The following recipe is a little different, but still sounds good.

Eight Layer Dinner

3 T unsalted butter

1 ½ pounds baking potatoes, peeled, cut into quarter inch slices

4 ounces salt pork, cut into quarter inch strips

1 clove garlic, minced

3 stalks celery, diced

1 large red pepper, finely chopped

1 to 1 ½ pound beef shoulder steak, cut into pieces quarter inch thick, 4 inches square

Salt and pepper

1 large onion, sliced

1 large green bell pepper, finely chopped

1 can (17 ounces) plum tomatoes

¼ C chopped fresh parsley

Heat oven to 325. Rub the bottom of a 3 quart Dutch oven with 1 tablespoon butter. Layer the sliced potatoes over the butter.

Render the salt pork in a large heavy skillet over medium heat until crispy. Remove with a slotted spoon; spread evenly over potatoes in Dutch oven.

Pour off all but about 2 teaspoons grease from skillet. Sauté garlic over medium-low heat for about 3 minutes. Remove from skillet and spread over potatoes. Sprinkle the celery and red peppers over the potatoes.

Heat remaining butter with oil in skillet over medium high heat. Sauté meat, a few pieces at a time, until well browned on both sides. As the meat is done, place over the celery and peppers in Dutch oven. Sprinkle meat lightly with salt and pepper. Place sliced onion over meat, then the green pepper and finally the tomatoes. Sprinkle tomatoes with salt and pepper. Bake covered in oven until meat is tender, about 1 ½ to 2 hours. If dinner seems too wet, bake uncovered 15 minutes. Sprinkle with parsley before serving.

TO ADVERTISE call 559-645-0634

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.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

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	-	4	+		= 8
+		+		-	
	-		×		= 2
-		÷		÷	
	+		÷		= 9
=		=		=	
11		2		5	

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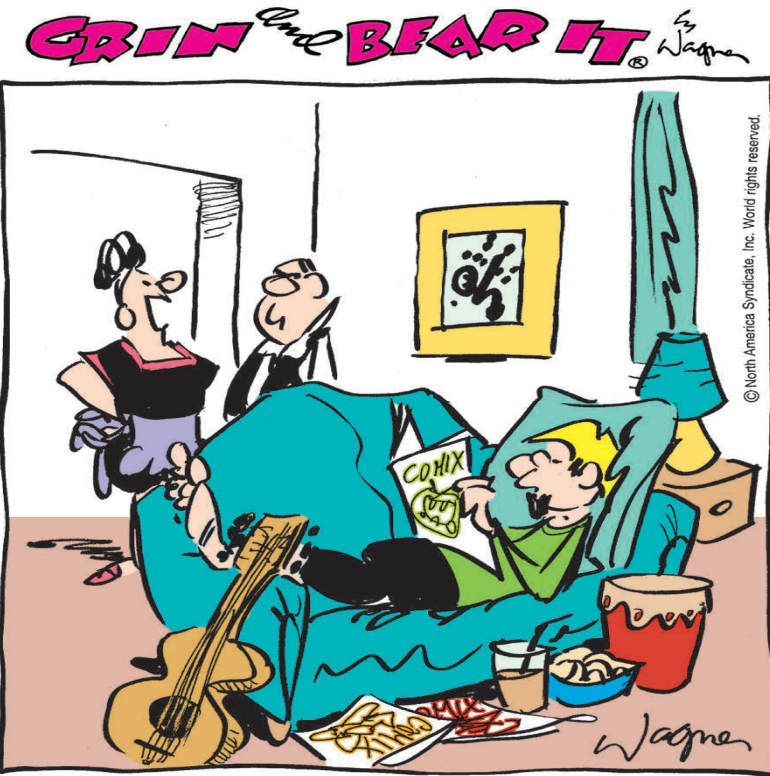
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Just Like Cats & Dogs by Dave T. Phipps

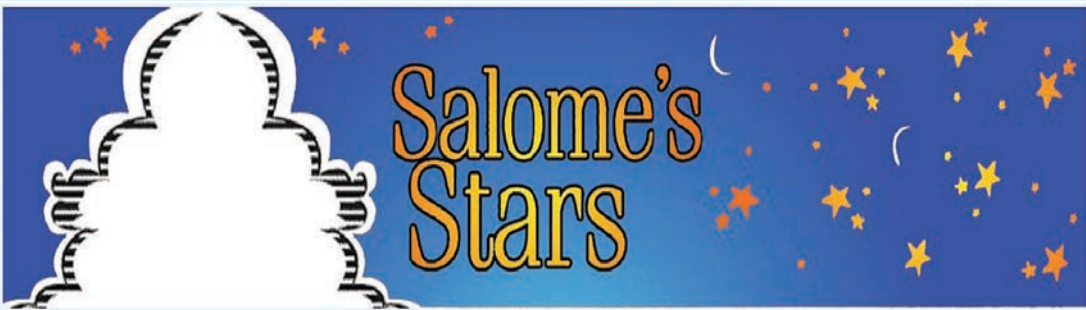




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“Junior says he won’t make the mistakes you made. ... He’s going to SAVE his comic books!”



ARIES (March 21 to April 19) You feel ready to face a major change, although it might involve some risks. A once-dubious family member comes around and offers support and encouragement.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20) Move forward with your plans, despite discouraging words from those who underestimate the Bovine's strong will. Your keen instincts will guide you well.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20) A misunderstanding is easily cleared up. Then go ahead and enjoy some fun and games this week! Meanwhile, a **LIBRA** might have ideas that merit serious consideration for the future.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22) You might feel as if you're in an emotional pressure cooker, but the situation is about to change in your favor. Take time out for some well-earned fun!

LEO (July 23 to August 22) A shift in your workplace responsibilities creates resentment among some co-workers. Deal with it before it becomes a threat to your success on the job.

VIRGO (August 23 to September 22) Expect some surprises in what you thought was one of your typically well-planned schedules. Deal with them, then enjoy some lighthearted entertainment.

LIBRA (September 23 to October 22) Be careful: What appears to be a solid financial opportunity might have some hidden risks attached. In addition, a hazy personal matter needs to be cleared up.

SCORPIO (October 23 to November 21) It's a good time to strengthen ties with family and friends. In other news, you might feel unsure about a recent workplace decision, but time will prove that you did the right thing.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22 to December 21) Just when you thought your relationship was comfortable and even predictable, your partner or spouse could spring a potentially life-changing surprise on you.

CAPRICORN (December 22 to January 19) Your usually generous self is overshadowed by your equally strong suspicious nature. You might be judging things too harshly. Keep an open mind.

AQUARIUS (January 20 to February 18) Love and romance dominate the week. Married Aquarians enjoy domestic harmony, while singles could soon be welcoming overtures from loving **LEOs**.

PISCES (February 19 to March 20) An old health problem recurs, but it is soon dealt with, leaving you eager to get back into the swing of things. Also, a favorable travel period starts this week.

Born this Week

You have an independent spirit that resists being told what to do. But you're also wise enough to appreciate good advice when you receive it.

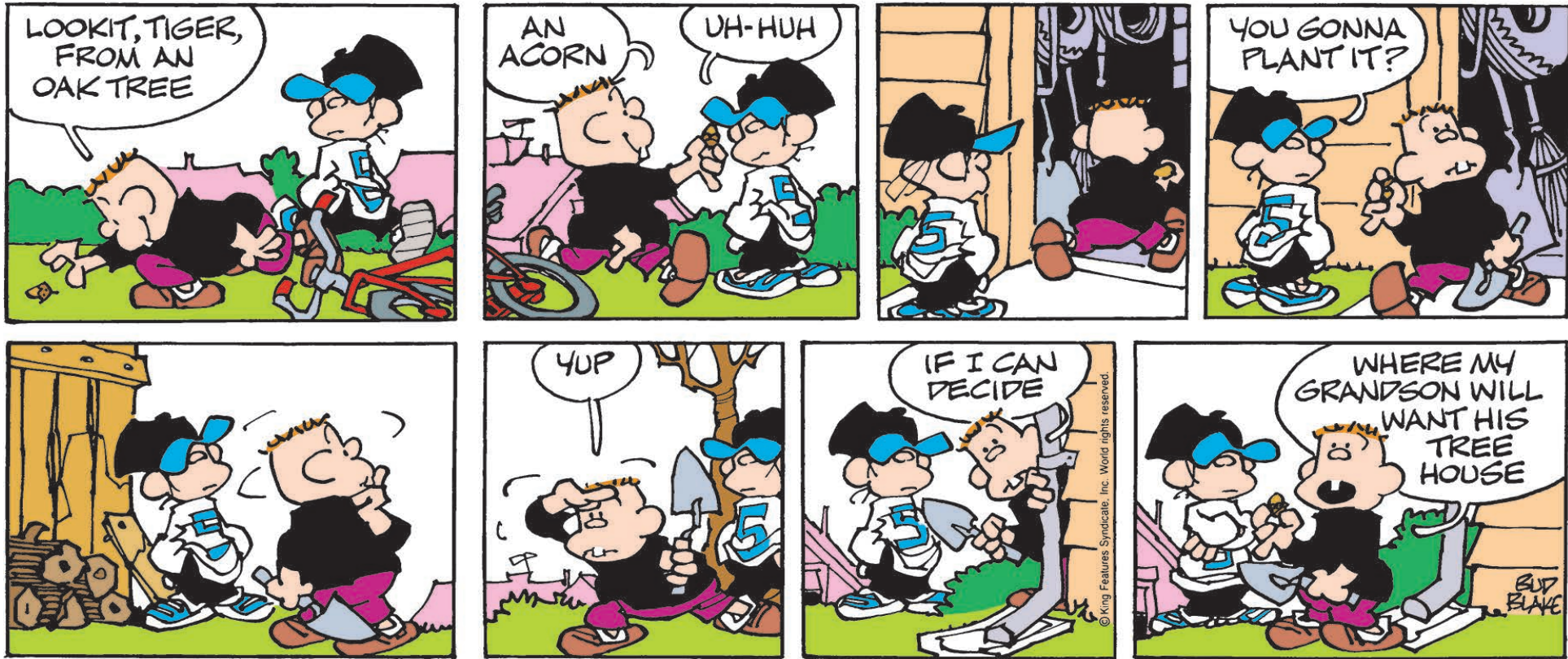
FUN PAGES

Kids' Maze



TIGER

by BUD BLAKE



TRIVIA TEST

By Fiji Rodriguez

1. MOVIES: What is the title of the first James Bond film? 2. GENERAL KNOWLEDGE: What is the color of the "black box" that records an airplane's performance? 3. TELEVISION: What is the theme song for the long-running sitcom "All in the Family"? 4. LITERATURE: What is the name of Ron Weasley's family home in the "Harry Potter" series? 5. GAMES: How many dice are used in a game of Yahtzee? 6. SCIENCE: What does a mole measure in chemistry? 7. MYTHOLOGY: What is the Greek god of darkness called? 8. FOOD & DRINK: Which type of liquor is traditionally used in a gimlet? 9. ASTRONOMY: How many moons does Saturn have? 10. CHEMISTRY: What is the chemical symbol for gold?



1. "Dr. No."
2. Orange.
3. "Those Were the Days."
4. The Burrow.
5. Five.
6. The amount of chemical substance.
7. Erebus.
8. Gin.
9. 274.
10. Au.

Amber Waves

UGH, I'M SO TIRED OF EATING FIELD GRASS EVERY DAY. WHAT I'D GIVE FOR A TACO.

OOOH! A PATCH OF THICK KENTUCKY BLUEGRASS. THAT'S EVEN BETTER!

CHOMP! CHOMP! CHOMP!

ACKK!! I TAKE IT BACK. AT LEAST WITH A TACO YOU DON'T GET A THISTLE IN IT!

by Dave T. Phipps

The Spats

WHAT DO YOU WANT FOR DINNER?

GULP

A CAKE WITH A FILE IN IT.

by Jeff Pickering

Out on a Limb

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PAY UP, PAL...

by Gary Kopervas

HOCUS-FOCUS BY HENRY BOLTINOFF

GARDEN SUPPLIES

GARDEN SUPPLIER

Find at least six differences in details between panels. Differences: 1. Word on sign is different. 2. Door is different. 3. Wheel is larger. 4. Box in window is moved. 5. Building is not as wide. 6. Hat is different.

SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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

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

Find the listed words in the diagram. They run in all directions forward, backward, up, down and diagonally. Unlisted clue hint: SLY LIKE A —

- Cabbage
- Carpet
- Corpuscle
- Crescent
- Cross
- Dwarf
- Onions
- Panda
- Pepper
- Planet
- Ribbon
- Salmon
- Snapper
- Square
- Squirrel

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FUN PAGES

SEM CU

south east madera county united

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

The Future of California Water Supply ? in Question ?

**Do you have a savings account for a rainy day?
Would you not like more \$ in your savings account to help
when you need it most?**

**Well, we need more water savings accounts for times of
need. Water behind dams is like money in a savings
account. We need more dams to store water for needed
times. More and higher dams are only part of the
solutions to our water crisis, but they are a necessary one.**

IT IS FIRE SEASON!

?Are you prepared?

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

Water Wells:	559-802-1289	waterwells@selfhelpenterprises.org
Water Quality:	559-802-1285	waterquality@selfhelpenterprises.org
Tank Water:	559-802-1685	tankandhailedwater@selfhelpenterprises.org
Bottled Water:	559-802-1284	bottledwater@selfhelpenterprises.org

SEM CU's next meeting is in person on Tuesday, July 15th at 6 p.m.

at the Ranchos Library Teleconference Room

37398 Berkshire Drive, Madera Ranchos Library

or online: go to: WWW.SEMCU.ORG for the link

by phone: 669-900-6833

& enter meeting ID#: 836 3242 4343 with access code 854 221

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