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The Official Publication of Southeastern Madera County

50¢

Raley's touches down in the Ranchos



company breaks ground
at Avenue 12 and Highway 41

In This Issue

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Community leaders, partners, and neighbors mark a milestone moment for one of the Central Valley's fastest-growing communities

Raley's, in partnership with Riverstone Development, officially broke ground on Thursday, June 18 at a new Raley's O-N-E Market at Riverwalk at Highway 41 and Avenue 12 in the Riverstone area of the Madera Ranchos. The store will be the first full-service grocery store in the Riverstone master-planned community.

The ceremony, held at the corner of Market Avenue West and Riverwalk Boulevard South, brought together Raley's leadership, Riverstone Development, Madera County elected officials, the Madera Chamber of Commerce and Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce to commemorate the next major chapter in the area's growth.

The new 40,000-square-foot store will anchor a broader 61,000-square-foot retail expansion at, marking Raley's second location in Madera County. Built to support the community, promote sustainability and healthy eating, the store is targeted to open in spring of 2027.

The concept of Raley's O-N-E Market is to bring a "best-in-class" grocery experience to Area residents. The store will feature freshly prepared foods, natural and organic products, locally sourced produce and an in-store café, featuring Starbucks products.

"Raley's believes access to fresh, healthy food has the power to transform lives," said Mike Teel, CEO and Owner of Raley's. "Today, we're bringing that commitment to Riverstone. This groundbreaking represents more than a new store, it's our promise to be a genuine community partner in Madera, investing in the health and wellness of the families who call this place home."

"Having a premier company like Raley's choose to invest in Riverstone with their flagship O-N-E Market says a lot about where this community is headed," said Supervisor Jordan Wamhoff. "People shouldn't have to leave their community to buy fresh groceries and healthy food options. This store is a major win for Riverstone, District 1, and Madera County."

"The Madera Chamber of Commerce and the Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce are pleased to congratulate Raley's O-N-E Market on this significant milestone

Raley's touches down in the Ranchos



celebrating the opening of their second store in Madera County," said Debi Bray, President and CEO of the Madera Chamber of Commerce. "In addition to offering customers fresh, healthy, and high-quality food choices, Raley's is also committed to supporting local hunger-relief initiatives and strengthening the communities they serve, providing more than just an economic boost."

Raley's is a family-operated grocery company. Founded in 1935, Raley's stores are the destination for fresh products, affordable offerings and personalized service. Raley's operates 121 stores under four banners: Raley's, Bel Air Markets, Nob Hill Foods and Raley's O-N-E Market. Raley's has expanded beyond the store to operate grocery curbside pick-up and delivery in their nearby communities.

Retire Your U.S. Flag Respectfully



My name is Mario Navarro Jr. and I will be entering my junior year at Liberty High School in the Madera Ranchos. My primary goal is to serve our country by earning an appointment to the United States Air Force Academy and honoring my father's Air Force service.

The Flag Disposal Initiative was created to provide community members with a respectful and convenient way to retire worn or damaged American flags. By establishing easily accessible collection locations at Liberty High School, the Madera Ranchos Branch Library and Madera County Fire Station 9 in Rolling Hills, with additional locations to follow in the future, the program helps ensure that retired flags are disposed of with the dignity and respect they deserve

while promoting patriotism and civic responsibility throughout our community. Being involved in this project has allowed me to give back to those around me while demonstrating the values of leadership, service and respect that are important to me and align with my goals. I am committed to serving my community. I volunteer at the VA Central California Health Care System in Fresno, have served as an assistant coach for the Babe Ruth baseball team and helped launch the Flag Disposal Initiative in partnership with the Madera Ranchos Veterans Group.

I want to offer a special thank you to the Madera Ranchos Veterans Group, Rolling Hills Citizens Association and the Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce for their generous donations and support toward this project

Madera Deputy Shooting Kills Ranchos Home Invader, Attacker

An incident between a Madera County sheriff's deputy and an unidentified man who was seen swinging a crowbar in the streets of the Ranchos, ended in a shooting by the deputy that killed the man on the afternoon of June 19.

The man had allegedly broken into a Ranchos home on Avenue 12 near Road 35 where the homeowner was not at home, but saw him entering on their security camera. A sheriff's deputy was called and was on scene, trying to detain the man when the man began fighting the deputy and grabbed the deputy's taser and attempted to use it on the deputy. The deputy then drew her weapon and shot the man.

Madera County Sheriffs received a call around 4:30 p.m. on Friday afternoon from the homeowner who had seen an "unknown person" in their home on their security camera. Right after that, a second call about a man walking in the

middle of Avenue 12 with a crowbar was registered. The deputy arrived and tried to detain the suspect, but the man became combative and it turned into a fight in the middle of Avenue 12. In the fight, the man was able to take the deputy's taser away from her and tried to use it on the deputy. That was when the deputy drew her pistol and shot the attacker.

Many witnesses were reported to have attempted to help the deputy stop the fight. After the shooting, authorities gave medical aid to the suspect, but he was pronounced dead at the scene. At the same time, two "Good Samaritans" gave aid to the deputy who reportedly received "some bumps and bruises" but appears to otherwise be okay.

The suspect has not been identified. Anyone who witnessed the altercation or has any information about the incident is asked to contact the Madera County Sheriff's Office at 559-675-7703.

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Kiwanis Korner

Ranchos Kiwanis Reward Local Students

The winning ticket for our Mother's Day Raffle Basket was drawn on May 2 at the Ranchos/Hills Senior Center – Home & Garden Festival. The lucky individual was Jamie Bibb who enjoyed all the Mother's Day surprises packed in that basket. And thank you, Jamie, for supporting the Kiwanis. In fact, thanks to the many of you that supported this fundraiser which allows us to provide successfully for the children and families of our communities.

The month of June had us doing just that. We presented three John Minney – Liberty High School Senior Scholarships on May 20. The recipients were Daisy Harr, Nathan Nguyen and Angeline Santiago. Each student received a certificate along with a

were presented on June 9 to Kaley Maciel and Paul Robles. Each of these students received a certificate with a \$100 check.



From left, Mona Diaz, Jamie Bibb, Marie Cameron and Jolene Mason.



The three recipients of the Kiwanis-John Minney Liberty High School Senior Scholarships are flanked by community members, from left, Sally Rowden, President of Kiwanis Club of Madera Ranchos, scholarship winner Daisy Harr, Chad Harr (Donor from Chad's Trucking), scholarship winners Angeline Santiago and Nathan Nguyen, and Gina Markos (Donor from Bubba's Water Truck Service, Inc.).

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*All Proceeds go to Madera Ranchos' Kiwanis' Club, to support children within

\$1,200 scholarship check. Daisy will be seeking a degree in Architecture at California State University, Fresno. Nathan will be headed to University of California, Los Angeles majoring in Pre-Med. And Angeline is attending the University of California, Irvine focusing on a Public Health Degree.

The Kiwanis Hope of America Awards at Ranchos Middle School

Please see **KIWANIS** on P. 16

Say you saw it in the Independent

Newsom Fined by Campaign Watchdog Ahead of DOJ Probe

By Katy Grimes

Last week, the California Fair Political Practices Commission fined Governor Gavin Newsom \$31,500 for failing to timely report more than \$5.6 million in “behested” payments. Newsom solicited these “behest” payments from private sector companies and then failed to timely report this to the FPPC, the State Campaign Finance Watchdog.

“Behested” payments are donations that Gov. Newsom solicits from donors for his chosen nonprofits, charities, or government-related purposes. According to the FPPC, behested payments are also a California-specific mechanism under the Political Reform Act that allows elected officials (and Public Utilities Commission members) to solicit donations from individuals, companies, or organizations for charitable, legislative, or governmental purposes — without the money going directly to the official’s campaign or personal use.

Under California law, these are not treated as campaign contributions or personal gifts to the official, according to the FPPC. Officials must report them on Form 803 if they total \$5,000+ from a single source in a calendar year. There are no dollar limits on the amounts, which has drawn criticism as a potential loophole for influence.

Except some of Newsom’s behest payments did go to his campaign committees

controlled by Newsom.

Between 2018 and 2019, UnitedHealth donated \$220,000 to political committees controlled by Newsom, who later awarded \$492 million in contracts to UnitedHealth subsidiaries in no-bid and expedited situations. That’s a \$220,000 investment for a \$492 million return.

In 2020 alone, while Newsom had the state under his ordered lockdowns, he “behested” \$226,520,000+ from various corporations that operate in California.



“California Governor Gavin Newsom helped bankroll his wife’s charity with nearly \$2 million he solicited from a Native American tribe – while fighting on its behalf to kill a rival casino,” The Daily Mail reported last year. Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria tribe donated \$1.8 million to The California Partners Project, a nonprofit co-founded by Newsom’s wife Jennifer Siebel Newsom, and another \$450,000 to fund his inaugurations. Newsom and the state then joined the tribe’s efforts to block a casino from opening just 15 miles from theirs, filing a lawsuit in May challenging the federal government’s approval of the project.”

California law requires reporting donations of \$5,000 and more within 30 days. Newsom’s violations involved 36 late reports, for 35–36 donations, from 2024 and 2025, filed 64 – 229 days late. Many related

Please see NEWSOM on P. 7

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Guest Editorial

Becerra's Failures Exposed

By Megan Barth

In a lengthy and epic response to a New York Times hit piece, Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. dismantled the legacy media's narrative while exposing the failures of his predecessor, Xavier Becerra — now the Democratic front-runner in California's gubernatorial race.

Secretary Kennedy's pointed rebuttal tore into the Times for its pre-conceived thesis and anonymous sourcing. He sharply contrasted his own leadership with Becerra's tenure at Health and Human Services.

"His only notable accomplishments here were losing 300,000 children, referred to HHS for custody and care, to human traffickers and drug runners, encouraging transgender surgeries, and disabling the entire program-integrity apparatus, allowing hundreds of billions of dollars of theft from my agency," Kennedy wrote. "I have set out to find the children Becerra lost. He is now the front-runner for the governor of California."

Kennedy added that Becerra "re-

portedly spent most of his term as Health and Human Services Secretary in California" and "almost never showed up for work here during his four years in office, leaving the building largely empty.

"When the new administration arrived," Kennedy noted, "there were still artifacts from the first Trump administration in many of our office drawers because no one showed up for work during the Biden years,"

Becerra advanced from the June 2

"These children were not being sent to their parents," White told the senators. "They were being trafficked."

top-two primary and will face republican Steve Hilton in November. The former congressman and California Attorney General has pitched himself as a seasoned fighter

with federal experience. But Kennedy's takedown, backed by years of California Globe reporting, reveals a far different record.

During Becerra's time at Health and Human Services, the Office of Refugee Resettlement lost track of more than 300,000 unaccompanied migrant children. Multiple investigations and media coverage exposed how many ended up in exploitative situations, including labor trafficking. Failures at sites like the Pomona

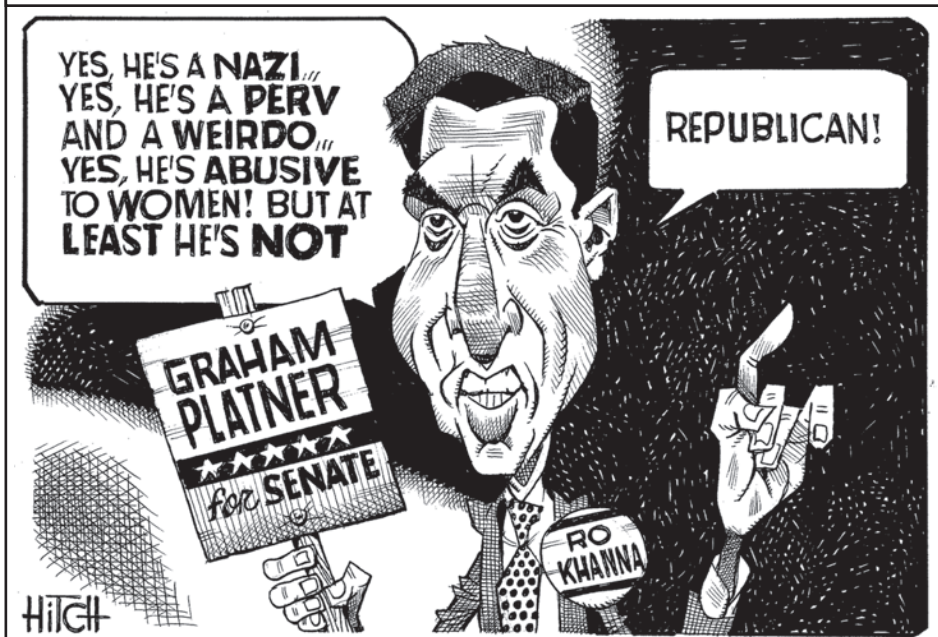
Emergency Intake Site highlighted fake sponsor addresses — including empty fields and abandoned or non-existent houses — and children sent to gang members, human traffickers and child predators.

A pair of whistleblowers who worked at the Pomona site (the federal workers were "seconded" there from other duties and worked with a federal contractor called "Cherokee Federal" to process the children) testified in front of a United States Senate "roundtable" meeting (it was not technically a hearing — most likely the Democratic majority on the committee did not want it to be "official" in that way).

The tales were harrowing.

Deborah White told the committee she realized something was wrong early on but was stymied by adminis-

Please see **EDITORIAL** on P. 12



The Independent

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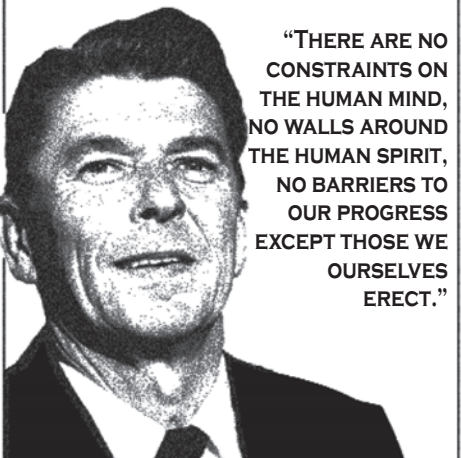
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RONALD REAGAN
 SAYING MORE IN ONE QUOTE THAN OTHERS SAY IN A LIFETIME

Our Father's Day Tradition

My father and I have been playing the same game for years. Neither of us remembers exactly when it started, but at some point it became a regular part of our conversations. We don't keep score. There are no trophies. There aren't even any official rules. Yet somehow, we both know exactly how to play. It doesn't actually have a name, but I like to call it, "How Do They Manage to Tie Their Shoes?"

The premise is simple: At some point during the day, one of us encounters a person who leaves us staring into the middle distance, wondering how they successfully navigate basic life functions and whether proximity to them cost us an IQ point or two. We then call each other and share the story. For Father's Day, it seemed only fitting that I share a few of my favorite people who maybe should take a class on common sense and basic human interaction.

One of Dad's best stories happened in Home Depot. He was looking for something, and like most things in Home Depot, the remaining inventory was stored approximately

My father and I have been playing the same game for years ... it doesn't actually have a name, but I like to call it, "How Do They Manage to Tie Their Shoes?"

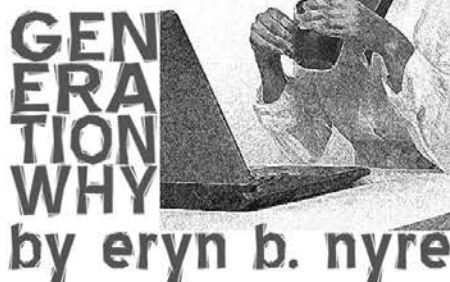
three stories above ground level. So, he tracked down an employee and asked him to grab a couple of items from the top shelf. The employee dragged over a ladder, climbed up and asked Dad how many he needed.

"Two," Dad replied.

Now, this is where Dad and I differ. Dad firmly believes he can fix "stupid." He thinks if he explains the logic clearly enough, a person will have an epiphany and begin making better decisions for the rest of their life. I think people usually just get offended and continue making bad decisions with renewed enthusiasm. So, when the employee asked how many he needed, Dad looked at the completely empty shelf below and said, "Since it's empty, shouldn't you bring down a whole stack and restock it?"

To which the employee replied, "But you only need two."

Dad made another attempt to explain that eventually another customer might also need the item, but the employee remained committed to his vision. He brought down exactly two, left the shelf empty, and wandered off,



leaving someone else to repeat the entire exercise later.

After hearing the story, I gave the standard response required by the rules of the game, "What is wrong with people?" In the context of the game, that's the equivalent of an Olympic judge holding up a 9.8.

A long-time favorite is the drive-through and the 50-cent piece. Dad tried to pay for his burrito with some

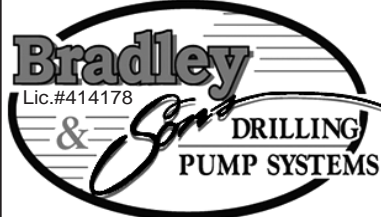
cash and a 50-cent piece and the kid at the window said they didn't accept those coins. It turned into a whole ordeal as the manager was called and seemed as dubious as the first

kid. It took multiple employees and a Google search before Dad got his burrito. Thank goodness for smartphones, I guess.

The game isn't about ordinary brain farts. Dad and I have both walked into rooms and forgotten why. We've searched for phones while holding them and looked for glasses while wearing them. The game is about people who cannot grasp simple logic if it slaps them in the face or tries to explain it with crayons. Just when you think you've seen everything, someone mistakes legal tender for a practical joke, asks a question so bewildering your brain temporarily stops accepting new information, or does something so confusing you immediately know you'll be telling the story at dinner.

For a final example, Dad had gone to a local restaurant with two friends and was waiting for a fourth person to arrive. The manager explained that they couldn't seat them until the entire party was present because they needed to know how large a table to assign.

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



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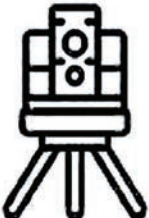
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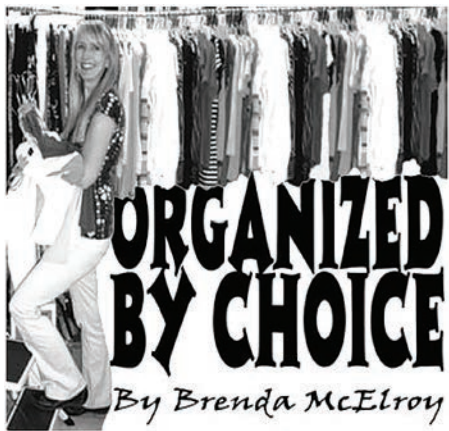
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Kids' Clothes — Cycle of Life

When my twin granddaughters were born, they were swimming in their preemie clothes. That first year, they graduated through five sizes. Keeping the right size accessible took effort.

The nature of raising kids is change. Whether it's clothes, shoes, toys, sports or other supplies, there's a constant rotation to keep up with current sizes, needs and desires. Add the task of saving and storing items for siblings down the line, and it can feel overwhelming. Here are six tips to manage the cycle.

"Too Small" container —

Place a labeled hamper or bin in each kid's closet for clothes and toys they've grown out of. Use a separate container or bag for shoes. As soon as something no longer fits, is no longer worn, or no longer played with, toss it in the bin.

Sort & store — When the bin's full, separate the clothes from the toys. Wash and place the clothes that are worth saving for a sibling in a vacuum bag. Put small toys in zip bags. Create a

spreadsheet or keep a notebook for toy/clothes inventory, if desired. (It's surprising how quickly we forget what we have.) Place bags in stacking bins or underbed containers and label with gender, size and season. Store in the garage, closet, or under the bed. Ensure that labels are visible.

Seasonal swap — At the end of each season, purge items from closets/dressers that will not fit next year and add the

keepers to the bins. Do the same with toys. Pull out the next appropriate bin for the younger sibling. Sort again before unpacking into the closet to ensure it's stuff they'll need and use.

Reduce what you save — If you discover you're buying new for younger ones anyway, reduce the amount you're saving to just a few favorites. Less to manage.

Donate — Donating is the fastest route to clearing out clothes that don't make the cut or have made the rounds through all the kids. Here are some options: Support our local Ranchos/Hills Seniors Center by donating to their monthly sale (5 5 9 - 6 4 5 - 4 8 6 4) ; JustPorchIt.com (800-965-6519) will pick up your bagged items from your porch — clothes, shoes, etc. as long as they're not wet or moldy; Thrift on Blackstone (mcc-thrift.com/ 559-515-6362) and

Neighborhood Thrift (neighborhoodindustries.org/559-498-0708) accept sellable and unsellable clothes/material to be recycled — keeps them out of the landfill.

Sell — For a financial return on your investment, bundle clothes items to sell. Try Facebook Marketplace or Just Between Friends (Fresno. JBFsale.com), a twice-a-year event where you tag and price your own items, drop them off, and earn 60–70 percent of sales. (Just make sure you don't come away with more than you brought!)

Fairy God-mother's Closet (fgcloset.com/559-207-3767) in Fresno will purchase your goods with cash and you can use it in store for additional savings. Poshmark, Depop and Mercari are other online options for selling.

With a plan and supplies in place for each step — saving, sorting, storing and letting go, you'll glide through the cycle hassle-free.

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

The nature of raising kids is change. Whether it's clothes, shoes, toys, sports or other supplies, there's a constant rotation to keep up ... here are six tips to manage the cycle.

NEWSOM cont. from P. 4

to recovery efforts after the 2025 Los Angeles wildfires, directed largely to groups like the California Fire Foundation. Major donors included corporations and foundations such as \$500,000 from BlackRock, Apple, Amazon, Lockheed Martin and \$1 million from the Chuck Lorre Foundation. Newsom agreed to the settlement, the Mercury News reported. The FPPC described it as a "paperwork issue" with no evidence of intent to conceal the funds. The fine was \$1,750 per late report, below the maximum.

This is Newsom's second such FPPC settlement for similar behested payment reporting failures. In late 2024, he paid a \$13,000 fine for earlier violations involving payments from companies like Microsoft, Amazon and T-Mobile. This is pay-to-play politics, or legally known as "quid pro quo," a Latin term meaning "something for something."

The current case involves behested payments made during the 2025 Los Angeles Wildfires and were related to support-

ing recovery from the devastating fires. This matter involves 36 payments of \$5,000 or more made in 2024 and 2025 by various companies and individuals to entities at Newsom's behest. For each of these payments, Newsom failed to timely file a corresponding behested payment report with the Governor's Office within 30 days and thereafter with the Fair Political Practices Commission. Newsom failed to timely file a behested payment report for all of these "contributions" as well as many others in the report.

The FPPC notes, "Newsom has served in public office since 1997... elected Governor of California in 2018. Therefore, Newsom has significant experience with the Act."

Gavin Newsom tried to get out ahead of this FPPC report, and then the DOJ investigation by claiming that it's "all revenge and a witch hunt by President Donald Trump and the U.S. DOJ."

Katy Grimes is the Editor in Chief of the California Globe.

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Senior Report

Ranchos/Hills Seniors Celebrate America's Independence Day

By Melanie Williams

Summer is officially here with beautiful warm weather and lots of fun outdoor activities. Happy Independence Day to the Madera Ranchos community.

July 4 is celebrated with fireworks, Independence Day events and family gatherings. The members of the Ranchos/Hills Senior Center are taking a break from their regular volunteer duties to observe the July 4th Independence Day weekend. The Senior Center will be closed on Friday, July 3 and Saturday, July 4.

The July Saturday Sale is scheduled for July 11, from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. We will NOT be open on the July 4th holiday for our Monthly Saturday Sale. The Senior Center will be taking donations during the months of June and July, to prepare for the upcoming Saturday Sale on July 11. The best time to donate items to the Treasure House and Boutique is during the hours we are open, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Monday through Friday.

The Scout Garden is continuing to receive donations of potted plants from neighboring garden centers. The gardeners like donations of plastic pots, plant cuttings with roots and potting soil. You are encouraged to call the Senior Center before donating plants and garden cuttings so we can contact our volunteer gardeners to replant if needed. Thank you for all the wonderful donations we receive from the community to support our outreach to local seniors.

The Ranchos/Hills Senior Center is looking for senior volunteers to partner with us for the Monthly Saturday Sale in the Treasure House. The Ranchos/Hills Senior Center would welcome volunteers to help with the organization of donated items and the operation of the Treasure House during the Saturday Sale days. Treasure House volunteers are diligently sorting through new and used summer items donated each week from the Ranchos community. Thank you for the continued support of donated items for our Treasure House, Boutique and Scout Garden. The Ranchos/Hills Seniors board is very willing to work with senior volunteers interested in learning more about the Treasure House. Call the Senior Center at 559-645-4864, to find out more information about volunteering to fulfill this important role.

The Ranchos/Hills Senior Center is sponsoring an educational seminar called

Medicare 101 on Tuesday, July 14 at 6:30 p.m. The speakers will present topics covering Medicare basics, plan options, costs and coverage of Medicare plans and enrollment alternatives. This is a free event hosted by Golden Outlook to provide seniors with an understanding of their options, before and after they enroll in Medicare. Any community member is encouraged to attend who is preparing to turn 65, as well as those who want a better understanding of their current Medicare coverage. The Medicare 101 presentation is located at the Ranchos/Hills Senior Center at 37330 Berkshire Drive in the Ranchos. You are welcome to call the Senior Center at 559-645-4864 for any additional information about the seminar.

Seniors can also hang out on the patio or inside our air-conditioned facility for the Senior Hot Lunch Program. If you have not signed up for the free hot senior lunches, please call 559-645-4864 or come by in person 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 for the Senior Hot 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 to participate in the Senior Exercise Class, no membership is required. We do ask if you would like to support us in providing our weekly exercise classes, you could please donate \$1 to help us continue to provide this activity for community seniors.

Terry Killingsworth is leading our

members of the appropriately named "The Ranchos/Hills Basket

Cases" in designing and weaving Indian pine needle baskets. There is still time to join the other "Basket Cases" and learn beginning basket weaving techniques together. The next

Basket Weaving classes are Tuesday, June 30, Tuesday, July 7 and Tuesday,

July 28 from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. You can join the Basket Cases in a fun time weaving pine needle baskets on the first and last Tuesday each month, no experience required.

Brown Bag Day is Wednesday, July 22. Pick up your Brown Bag at the Ranchos/Hills Senior Center from 10:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. Participants must register with the Madera County Food Bank before picking up a Brown Bag. The Senior Center has applications for Brown Bag Day at the front desk.

If you are new to the Senior Center, come by and pick up our monthly calendar filled with information about each activity and event.

Happy Independence Day from the members of the Rancho/Hills Senior Center.

Quote for July: "Nothing but harmony, honesty, industry and frugality are necessary to make us a great and happy people." -- George Washington



Ranchos/Hills Seniors celebrate birthdays and anniversaries for the month of May at Red Lobster Restaurant in Fresno.

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It's "Zook" Time

(June 2016)

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



chini!

For as long as I can remember, our family has had a garden. My grandparents had a huge garden that not only had vegetables but included a small orchard with peach, apricot, apple and fig trees, and grape vines. When we moved to San Francisco during the Second World War, my

folks had a Victory Garden in our backyard. Victory Gardens were planted in backyards, empty lots and even on roof tops. They were used along with Rationing Stamps to reduce the pressure on the public food supply. Victory Gardens were a part of daily life on the home front.

Then back to Chowchilla and another garden in the back yard.

Mama grew everything from beans to zucchini. There was always enough for dinner during the summer and nothing was wasted. If it wasn't eaten or given away, it was canned (green

For the past week I have been fretting over what to write about this month. I've just about run out of original ideas and I hated the thought of doing a re-run – they are no fun.

Yesterday Pam was at Randy's desk talking to him about an ad for her quilting business. As she was leaving, I introduced myself and said if she had a recipe she would like to share, I would be happy to include it in my article. She said she had a recipe that was a favorite of her family. She gave me her recipe

for zucchini casserole – it is different from our family's recipe so I will call it Pam's Zucchini Casserole. Thanks Pam for the recipe and giving me the idea for my article this month: Zuc-



Daddy -- Orville Briner -- in our Victory Garden in San Francisco around 1942.

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beans and tomatoes) in big pressure cookers or the vegetables were frozen.

Pam's Zucchini Casserole

6 C grated zucchini
4 C grated cheddar cheese
3 eggs, beaten
1 cube butter, melted
2 C dried cranberries
1 box herbed stuffing

Mix all but 2 C cheese in large bowl. Spread in two 9 x 13 baking dishes. Top with remaining cheese. Bake in 350 preheated oven for 45 min. to one hour or until very crisp and browned around edges and center is done. Let stand 10 minutes before serving.

Want a snack for the kids that they don't know they are eating zucchini?

Zucchini Fritters

1 ½ pounds zucchini – grated
1 tsp. salt
¼ C all-purpose flour
¼ C grated parmesan
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 large egg, beaten

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
2 T Olive oil

Place zucchini in a colander in sink. Add salt and gently toss to combine. Let sit for 10 minutes. Using a clean dish towel or cheese cloth, drain zucchini completely.

In a large bowl, combine zucchini, flour, parmesan, garlic and egg; season with salt and pepper to taste.

Heat olive oil in a large skillet over medium high heat. Scoop tablespoons of batter for each fritter, flatten with a spatula. Cook until the underside is nicely golden brown, about 2 minutes. Flip and cook on the other side, about 1-2 minutes longer. Serve immediately.

Do you like Lasagna but try to avoid it as much as possible because of the carbs and calories in the noodles? Here's a recipe for lasagna that doesn't use noodles.

No-Noodle Zucchini Lasagna

2 large zucchinis
1 T salt
1 pound ground beef
1 ½ tsp. ground black pepper
1 small green pepper, diced
1 onion, diced
1 Cup tomato paste
1 (16 ounce) can tomato sauce
¼ C red wine
2 T. chopped fresh basil
1 T chopped fresh oregano
Hot water as needed
1 egg

1 (15 ounce) container low-fat ricotta cheese

2 T chopped fresh parsley

1 (16 ounce) package frozen chopped spinach, thawed and drained well

1 pound fresh mushrooms, sliced
8 ounces shredded mozzarella cheese

8 ounces grated parmesan cheese
Preheat oven to 325. Grease a deep 9 x 13 baking pan.

Slice zucchini lengthwise into very thin slices. Sprinkle with salt; set aside to drain in a colander.

To prepare the meat sauce, cook and stir ground meat and black pepper in a large skillet over medium high heat for 5 minutes. Add in green pepper and onion, cook and stir until meat is no longer pink. Stir in tomato paste, tomato sauce, wine, basil and oregano, adding a small amount of hot water if sauce is too thick. Bring to a boil; reduce heat and simmer sauce for about 20 minutes, stirring frequently.

Meanwhile, stir egg, ricotta, and parsley together in bowl until well combined.

To assemble lasagna, spread ½ of the meat sauce into the bottom of prepared pan. Then layer half the zucchini slices, half the ricotta mixture, all the spinach, followed by all the mushrooms, then the mozzarella cheese. Repeat by layering the remaining meat sauce, zucchini slices, ricotta mixture, and mozzarella. Spread Parmesan cheese evenly over the top, cover with foil

Bake for 45 minutes. Remove foil, raise oven temperature to 350 and bake an additional 15 minutes. Let stand for 5 minutes before serving.

At Randy's house, Vicki and the three girls are not meat eaters. This is a recipe Vicki gave me that they all love.

Vegan Zucchini Boat

6 large zucchinis
1 can black beans
1 can pinto beans

Cut the zucchini in half lengthways. With a melon scooper or spoon, remove the seeds and discard. Turn the zucchini over on clean towels and let drain. While zucchini is draining, cook the Spanish rice.

Spanish Rice

3 C white rice
1 small red onion chopped
1 C Salsa

Please see **RECIPE** on P. 16

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EDITORIAL cont. from P. 5

trators when she brought up any issues with the system.

“These children were not being sent to their parents,” White told the senators. “They were being trafficked.” Fraudulent documents abounded in the program and officials who were meant to meet face-to-face with sponsors often didn’t bother, White said.

“Children were sent to addresses that were abandoned houses or nonexistent in some cases,” White said. “In Michigan, a child was sent to an open field, even after we reported making a 911 call after hearing someone screaming for help, yet the child was still sent. Please understand, this is nothing less than taxpayer-funded child slavery, sanctioned by the government.”

When she pointed out issues with the sponsors, she was told it was “not her job to investigate” them.

Kennedy has committed to locating those lost children, a direct challenge to the agency Becerra led amid the Biden border surge, overlooked by Border Czar Vice President Kamala Harris.

Becerra’s Health and Human Services distributed over \$22.6 billion in grants, cash assistance, vehicles, housing and business aid to illegal immigrants, at the expense of American

citizens. Kennedy accused Becerra of gutting program-integrity efforts, enabling “hundreds of billions of dollars of theft.”

Becerra struggled to define “woman” during his confirmation hearing and pushed policies supporting taxpayer-funded transgender surgeries and interventions for minors. As a congressman, Becerra was linked to the Awan Brothers IT scandal. As California AG, he filed over 100 lawsuits against the Trump administration, costing taxpayers millions while championing progressive causes on immigration, healthcare and climate.

In his gubernatorial campaign, Becerra touts the Affordable Care Act, Medicare negotiations and COVID management. Yet California faces homelessness, rising costs, population flight and failing schools. Secretary Kennedy’s rebuke didn’t just challenge the New York Times. It delivered a timely reminder of Becerra’s record as Californians decide whether to entrust him with the nation’s largest – and most financially dependent – state on the U.S. government for the care and welfare of illegal immigrants and children, the very children that were “lost” by Xavier Becerra.

Megan Barth is the Executive Editor of The California Globe. This article originally appeared in the California Globe.

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GO FIGURE!

The idea of Go Figure is to arrive at the figures given at the bottom and right-hand columns of the diagram by following the arithmetic signs in the order they are given (that is, from left to right and top to bottom). Use only the numbers below the diagram to complete its blank squares and use each of the nine numbers only once.

		-		-		=	2		
+			+		+				
		-		+		=	11		
-			+		÷				
		+		÷		=	7		
=		=		=					
4		9		6					
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

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SEMUCU speaks

Results from June 2026 Mid-Term Elections

By Anthony Forestiere

Unofficial results from the June 2 California Primary Election indicate a relatively stable political landscape in Madera County, with incumbent officeholders performing strongly and several countywide races drawing little or no opposition. Election officials continue to count ballots, and final certification is expected in July.

The most closely watched contests were the races for seats on the Madera County Board of Supervisors. In District 1, incumbent Jordan Wamhoff appeared headed for another term after building a commanding lead over challenger Ben Martin. Wamhoff, first elected in 2022, maintained a substantial advantage

throughout the election night.

In District 2, longtime Supervisor David Rogers also held a decisive lead over Chowchilla City Councilmember John Chavez. Rogers, who has represented the district since 2011, appeared well positioned to secure another term on the board.

The open District 5 race drew the largest field of candidates and remained the county's most competitive contest. Former California Assemblymember Frank Bigelow emerged as the leading candidate, while Melanie Barker held second place. Because no candidate appeared likely to surpass the majority threshold required for an outright victory, the race appeared headed toward a November runoff between the top two finishers. Candidates Charles "Brook" Allen and Mark Reed also competed for the seat.

Several countywide offices generated little electoral drama. Assessor Brett Frazier, Clerk-Recorder and Registrar of Voters Rebecca Martinez, County Superintendent of Schools Tricia Protzman and Treasurer-Tax Collector Tracy Kennedy all sought reelection without opposition and appeared set to retain their positions.

The county's only contested countywide administrative race was for Auditor-Controller, where incumbent David Richstone faced challenger Anthony Forestiere. Early returns indicated Richstone held the advantage as ballot counting continued.

Beyond county government, Madera County voters also participated in several legislative races that will shape representation at the state and federal levels. Early returns showed strong performances by leading candidates in California Senate District 14 and Assembly District 27, while incumbent Congressman Tom McClintock maintained a comfortable lead within the portions of Madera County located in Congressional District 5.

Although the election-night results provide an early picture of voter sentiment, officials emphasize that they remain unofficial. Vote-by-mail ballots received during the canvass period; provisional ballots and other eligible ballots will continue to be processed before the election is certified.

The unofficial results nevertheless suggest that Madera County voters favored continuity in local government, with in-

cumbents largely maintaining strong support while the open District 5 supervisor seat remains the county's most significant unresolved contest heading toward the general election.

SEMUCU is a nonprofit organization that represents the interests of the residents, property owners and businesses in Southeastern Madera County. Its concerns, among other issues, are our community, safety, water, traffic, schools, future parks and energy. We invite our community to join and help make a difference for our families and youngsters. We invite community members to join SEMUCU as board members to help shape the Southeast Madera County area. Together we can build a stronger, more vibrant community.

SEMUCU meets once per month. 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. Make your voice heard!

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

GEN WHY cont. from P. 6

Dad looked around and asked, "Do you have tables for three?"

"No."

"Do you have tables for four?"

"Yes."

"So, whether there are three of us or four of us, we'd be sitting at the same table?" The manager thought about this and then doubled down. She would not seat them until all four people were there. Dad, being Dad, tried again.

If the fourth person turned around, went home, and never showed up, they would still need the same table. Nope.

If the fourth person got stuck in traffic, they would still need the same table. Nuh-uh.

If the fourth person spontaneously vanished into another dimension, they would still need the same table. Still no.

So, they waited until the fourth person arrived, at which point they were seated at exactly the table Dad knew they were going to be seated at all along. Logic didn't win that day. Logic doesn't

win a lot of days. The game is evidence of that.


The game is a lot of fun, but it's not about the stupid people who can't logic their way out of a paper bag. It's about the fact that after all these years, Dad and I still find reasons to call each other. We still share the little moments. We still laugh at the same things. We still have our own language, our own inside jokes, and our own traditions that would make absolutely no sense to anyone else.

Some families bond over sports. Some bond over fishing. Some bond over family recipes passed down through generations. My father and I bond by nominating complete strangers for the "How Do They Manage to Tie Their Shoes?" Award. Is it a strange tradition? Absolutely. Will we continue doing it? Without question.

And perhaps one day we'll finally answer the age-old question: How do these people manage to tie their shoes?

I already know what Dad's answer will be.

Velcro.

- 
- Unlike some genocides in which victims could sometimes avoid persecution by converting to another religion, Nazi Germany generally defined Jews by ancestry rather than personal belief. Under the Nuremberg Laws, a person's classification depended largely on the religious affiliation of parents and grandparents, so conversion to Christianity usually did not exempt someone of Jewish ancestry from anti-Jewish persecution.
 - Turtles can see well underwater, but on land they are nearsighted.
 - In one of his occasional efforts to improve public relations, Chicago gangster Al Capone opened a soup kitchen during the Great Depression.
 - During the pre-WWII drafts, an illiterate gentleman hoping to avoid military service asked his wife to write the draft board and explain how much he was needed at home. The plan backfired when his lady instead requested that her husband be taken because he was a "no-good" alcoholic who didn't help around the house.
 - Beer is the third-most popular drink on Earth, after water and tea.
 - An Ohio State University study found that women who reported stress in the previous 24 hours burned 104 fewer calories than nonstressed women after a high-fat meal.
 - In the U.S., graduating nurses take an oath called the Nightingale Pledge, named after Florence Nightingale and adapted from the Hippocratic Oath taken by doctors.
 - After his first son's birth, Claude Monet attempted suicide by jumping into the Seine. He was poor, estranged from his father and disappointed in the French art scene. Fortunately, he survived and later helped found the Impressionist movement.

Thought for the Day: "When obstacles arise, you change your direction to reach your goal; you do not change your decision to get there." -- Zig Ziglar

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RECIPE cont. from P. 9

4 C Water

Salt, Pepper and cumin to taste

With a small amount of oil in a large skillet brown the rice and the onion, season to taste with salt, pepper and cumin. While rice is browning, add the water and salsa to rice cooker. Add the browned rice and onion to cooker and cook until rice is done.

Place zucchini in Pyrex baking dish, cut side up. Cover with reserved beans. Cover with the Spanish rice mixture.

Bake in preheated 375 oven for 20 to 25 minutes. Cover the dish with foil if you want soft rice, or uncovered if you want crunchy rice.

And if you really want to disguise zucchini, how about a chocolate cake?

Chocolate Zucchini Cake

2 C all-purpose flour

2 C. white sugar

¾ C unsweetened cocoa powder

2 tsp. baking soda

1 tsp. baking powder

½ tsp. salt

1 tsp. ground cinnamon

4 eggs

1 ½ C vegetable oil

3 C grated zucchini

¾ C chopped walnuts

Preheat oven to 350. Grease and flour a 9 x 13 baking pan. In mixing bowl, stir together the flour, sugar, cocoa, baking soda, baking powder, salt and cinnamon.

Add the eggs and oil, mix well. Fold in the nuts and zucchini until they are evenly distributed. Pour into the prepared pan. Bake for 50 to 60 minutes in preheated oven, until knife inserted in center comes out clean.

This makes a moist fudgy cake. Can be frosted with your favorite frosting or eaten as is.

KIWANIS cont. from P. 3

recipients were Adam Orosco and Auxilia Tempas. And at Webster, the two recipients were Silvana Gutierrez and Yair Tinoco. Each of these students received a bicycle along with a helmet. Congratulations to each of these individuals for not only their achievements in academics but also in their leadership skills and positive character. All three of these characteristics are highly needed to become a productive, successful community member.

Kiwanis members Mona Diaz and Sally Rowden accompanied Webster Elementary on their Storyland Theme Park Field Trip. It was an exciting adventure especially since Paul's Pirate Ship is now open for children to explore.

We, the Kiwanis, were able to present all of above scholarships, awards, and events due to our fundraising efforts that many of you have supported. A huge thank you to all of our community businesses and individuals that have donated and continue to donate year after year. Our success along with the children's successes are from your generosity. Please note that pictures of these happenings will be published in the

Ranchos Independent throughout the summer months.

Special thanks go to John Minney, Bubba's Water Truck Service, Prewitt Dental Ranchos, Chad's Trucking, Bruce & Mary Blair, Wight Water Pool Service and Supplies, and one Anonymous Donor. Their very generous giving brought thankful smiles to the three Liberty High School Seniors.

Our plans are now gearing up for our fall fundraiser at our local Birdstone Winery. On Thursday, September 10 we will be presenting "Elvis in the Ranchos." This event will include dinner, a silent auction, one free drink ticket with your ticket purchase, and live entertainment. You must be 21 to attend. Currently tickets are available at the Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce Monday through Wednesday from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. or you can call Mona Diaz at 559-333-1913. Tickets are limited so order early to see Jeremy Pearce as Elvis. Our Venmo is available. If asked for the last four numbers, use #1675. Please type Elvis in the note section along with your email. A member will contact you to provide ticket confirmation.

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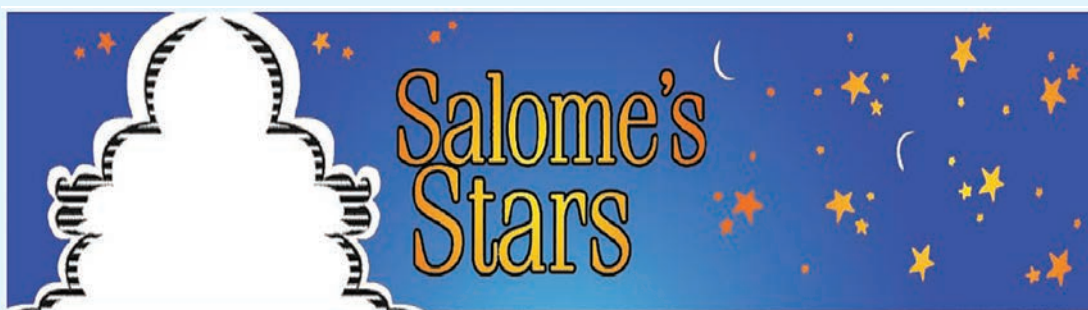
Click on "Local News" at

Just Like Cats & Dogs

by Dave T. Phipps



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ARIES (March 21 to April 19) A change of season reinvigorates the Lamb, helping to overcome the effects of a recent slower-paced period. A good time to restate your feelings for a certain someone.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20) You might not like using your authority to correct a workplace situation, but this is what being in charge is all about. Besides, you have people ready to lend support if need be.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20) Your creativity continues to run high and helps guide you to make some fine choices in the work that you're doing. Keep the weekend free for the special people in your life.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22) Don't be surprised if you experience a sudden spurt of energy that is strong enough to pull you out of a recent period of indecision and put you back in charge of your own goals.

LEO (July 23 to August 22) This is a good time for LEOS and LEONas to set new goals regarding health, educational choices, and possible career moves. The plans you make now could be a blueprint for your future.

VIRGO (August 23 to September 22) You might have much to offer to a potential employer, but it can all be overwhelmed by too many details. Let the facts about you speak for themselves without any embellishments.

LIBRA (September 23 to October 22) This is a good week to balance your responsibilities to your work-a-day world with your obligations to the people who are in your private life. Expect news that could lead to a change in plans.

SCORPIO (October 23 to November 21) A changing attitude on the part of a once-determined adversary could cause changes down the line. Be prepared to take advantage of an unexpected new opportunity!

SAGITTARIUS (November 22 to December 21) You'd be a truly wise SAGITTARIUS to be skeptical about an offer that doesn't answer all your questions. Even a colleague's testimonial doesn't replace facts that aren't there.

CAPRICORN (December 22 to January 19) It's a good idea to avoid spending money on unnecessary purchases this week in order to keep a reserve against a possible upcoming (but fortunately temporary) shortfall.

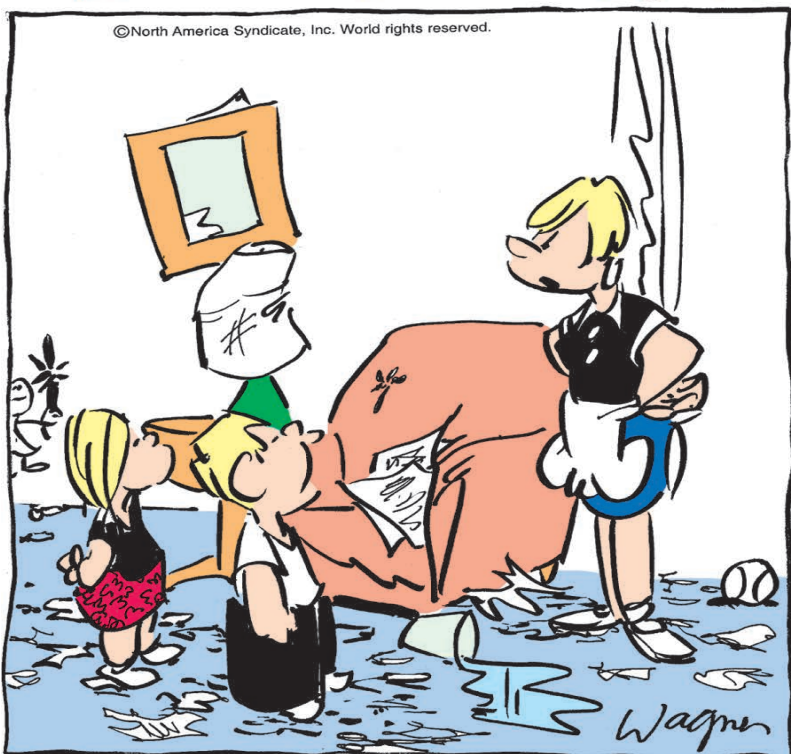
AQUARIUS (January 20 to February 18) More information is what you should demand regarding a workplace situation that recently came to light. Don't be surprised at who might turn up as one of your supporters.

PISCES (February 19 to March 20) You might still be in a "treading water" mode, but by midweek, a shift in your aspect favors taking a more active role in pushing for the changes that you feel are necessary. Good luck!

ADS
LOGOS
PR
MARKETING
645-0634

GRIN and BEAR IT Wagner

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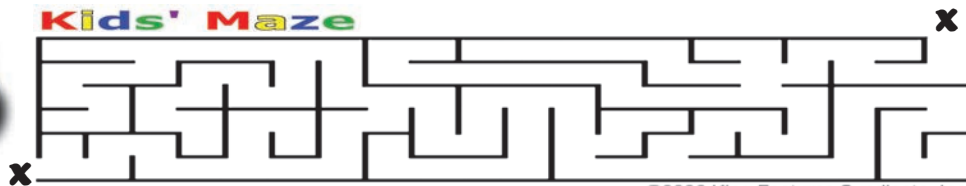
"We were going through a phase, Mom!"

Born this Week

You exude a warm, caring attitude that comforts everyone who comes into your life.

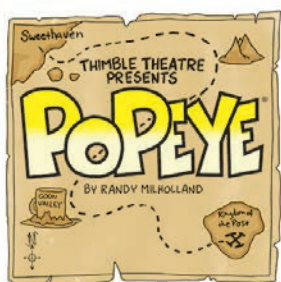
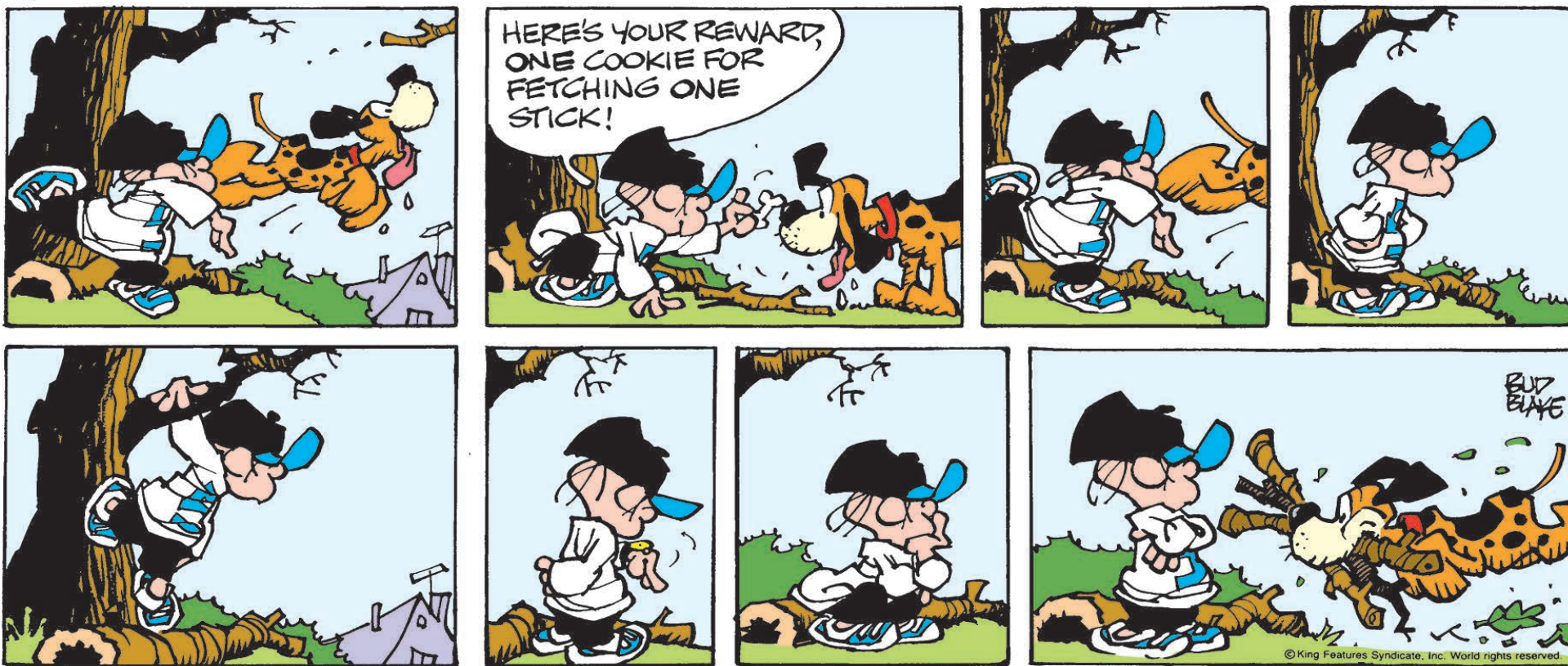
FUN PAGES

Kids' Maze



TIGER

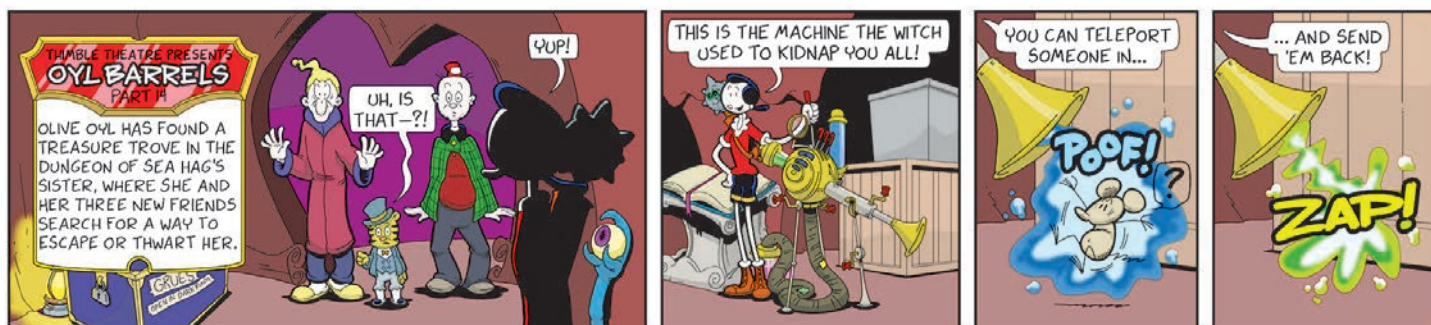
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by **BUD BLAKE**



TRIVIA TEST

By Fifi Rodriguez

- U.S. STATES:** Which state has the most national parks?
- ANATOMY:** Which blood type is considered to be a universal donor?
- GENERAL KNOWLEDGE:** Which three signs of the Zodiac are considered to be Earth signs?
- ROYALS:** What was Queen Elizabeth's favorite dog breed?
- GEOGRAPHY:** Which continent has a mountain range called The Great Rift Valley?
- MONEY:** What is the basic currency of Russia?
- TELEVISION:** Which long-running TV sitcom features a dog named Comet?
- MUSIC:** How many strings does a standard violin have?
- GAMES:** How many title deeds does the Monopoly game have?
- SCIENCE:** What is the main cause of ocean tides?



- California.
- Type O negative.
- CAPRICORN, TAURUS and VIRGO.
- Corgis.
- Africa.
- The ruble.
- "Full House."
- Four.
9. 28.
- The gravitational pull of the Moon.

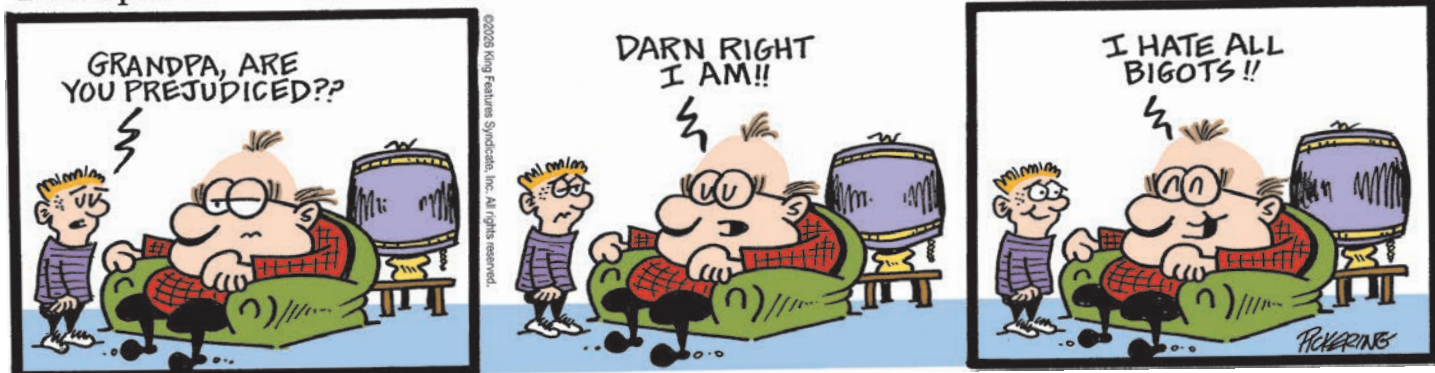
Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps



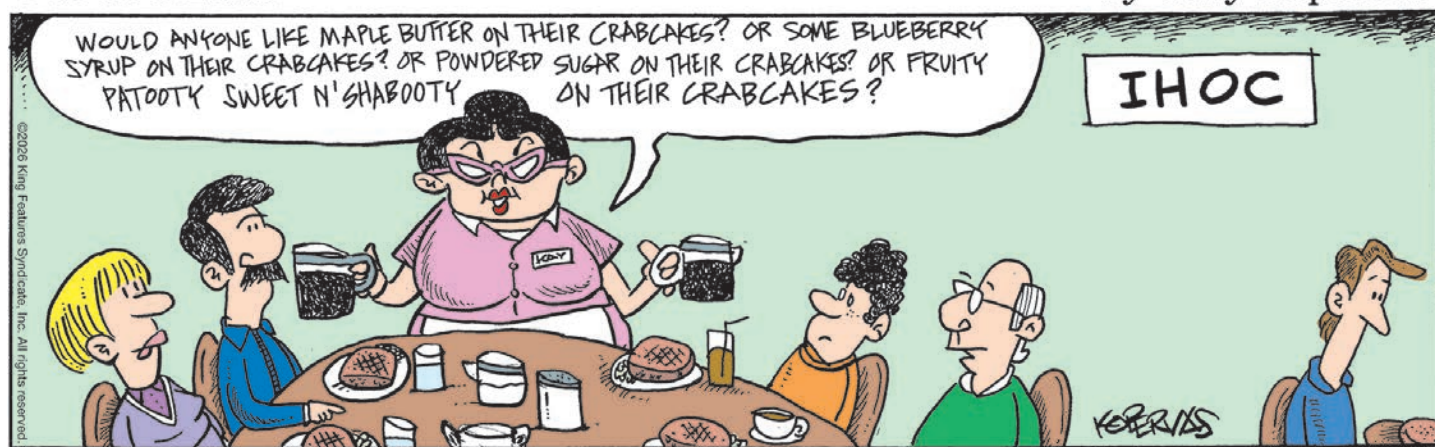
The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



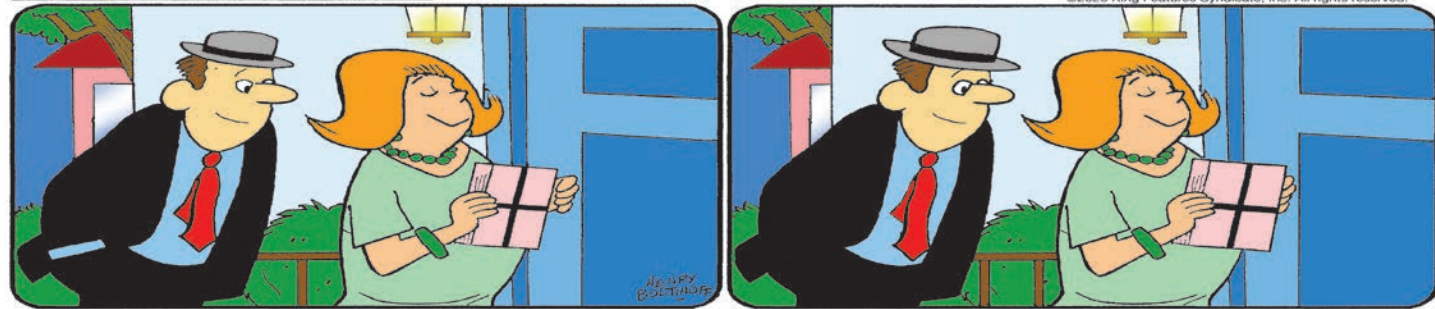
Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas



HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels. Longer. Differences: 1. Box is larger. 2. Tie is larger. 3. Railing is longer. 4. Hat is larger. 5. House is wider. 6. Jacket sleeve is longer.

SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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

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The Independent

CALL 559-645-0634

WORDS ASSOCIATED WITH FATHER'S DAY

MAGIC MAZE

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

Find the listed words in the diagram. They run in all directions forward, backward, up, down and diagonally. Unlisted clue hint: NOT NEGATIVE

Caring	Funny	Protective	Supportive
Clever	Generous	Soft-hearted	Trusting
Devoted	Handy	Special	Wise
Fraternal	Hardworking	Stable	

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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

FREE MEDICARE EDUCATIONAL SEMINAR

will be held at the

Ranchos Hills Senior Center

to offer information and assistance on
new or existing MEDICARE enrollment

Tuesday, JULY 14, 2026 @ 6:30 pm

37330 Berkshire Drive, Madera, 93636

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	tankandhauledwater@selfhelpenterprises.org
Bottled Water:	559-802-1284	bottledwater@selfhelpenterprises.org

SEM CU meets the 3rd Tuesday every month

Our next meeting is online on Tuesday, July 21st at 6 p.m.

Online: go to: WWW.SEMCU.ORG for the link

Or by phone: 669-900-6833

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

559-363-9095 • www.semcu.org • info@semcu.org

FOR THE COMMUNITY, BY THE COMMUNITY