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Chamber Crab Feed Rolls On!

Chamber members, from left, Ollia Ridge and Chamber President Mike Fursman, present the Chamber's Volunteer of the Year award to Priscilla Burgin at the 22nd Annual Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce Community Crab Feed.

Photo courtesy of Bill Whyman

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THE GOLDEN VALLEY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE CRAB FEED TURNS 22!

For the 22nd annual time, the Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce pulled off the event of the year at the fabulous Dante Club in Fresno. As a definitive sign that the “Covid era” is behind us, this year’s

crab feed broke attendance records by feeding 280 hungry attendees.

In addition to the mountains of crab, there was salad, bread, pasta and dessert. In addition to the food — which was the

star attraction — there were also tables filled with items for the auctions, both silent and live.

The Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce Crab Feed is the organization’s pre-

mier fundraising vehicle, providing a healthy portion of the non-profit’s annual operating capital. Typically held the first week in March, the event usually sells out. This year was no exception.



As the night got started, every one of the record 280 attendees found their tables and anticipated the 22nd Annual Crab Feed.



As the night progressed, there wasn’t an empty table at the Dante Club, home of the Annual Crab Feed for the last several years.



Member Priscilla Burgin, right, received the Volunteer of the year award from President Mike Fursman and member Ollia Ridge.



Keeping everything in the dining room under control during the feed were the Ranchos Kiwanis, who raised money for their projects.

Liberty High Now 2026 Cal Distinguished School

Liberty High School is proud to announce that it has been selected as a 2026 California Distinguished School, one of the most prestigious honors a public school can receive in the state. Fewer than five percent of high schools in California earn this recognition, making this achievement an incredible point of pride for the entire Liberty High School community.

The California Department of Education recognized Liberty High School in two categories: “Exemplary High Achievers” and “Achievement Gap Closers.” These recognitions highlight schools that demonstrate outstanding academic achievement while also ensuring that historically underserved student groups are making strong and measurable progress.

This award is based on data from the 2025 California School Dashboard, which evaluates schools across multiple measures, including academic performance, student growth, graduation rates and college and career readiness. Schools must also meet strict accountability standards, including high participation in statewide assessments and maintaining strong indicators of school climate.

This recognition is a direct reflection of the hard work, dedication, and

commitment of Liberty High School students, staff, families and the entire Liberty High School community. Teachers continue to provide rigorous instruction and meaningful support for students, while students demonstrate perseverance, leadership and pride in their learning every day.

This milestone belongs to the entire Hawk family. Liberty High School would like to thank everyone who continues to support its mission of ensuring that every Liberty High School student is prepared for success in college, career and life.



Cal Politicians Call to Halt Gas Tax

By John Ross Ferrara, Rachel Menitoff, Marc Sternfield

California gubernatorial candidates and other politicians are calling for a temporary suspension of the state’s 88-cent gas tax as fuel prices continue to climb across Southern California. In Los Angeles County, regular fuel is averaging \$5.56 per gallon, with some areas seeing increases of more than 50 cents since February, the start of the U.S.-Israel war with Iran.

The proposal to lift the tax, which is the highest in the nation, comes as some analysts project prices could eventually reach \$7 per gallon. California gas prices currently sit about \$1.50 higher than the national average. This gap is attributed to environmental fees and the state’s requirement for a specialized, cleaner-burning fuel blend.

San Jose Mayor Matt Mahan, a candidate for governor, is among those calling for immediate legislative action to address the costs.

“I’m calling on Sacramento to temporarily suspend California’s gas tax, which is the highest in the nation,” Mahan said. Fox News commentator Steve Hilton, a Re-

publican who is also running for governor, stated his support on social media.

The proposal has an avenue in the state legislature. California State Sen. Tony Strickland (R-Huntington Beach), filed a bill in February to eliminate the gas tax immediately, arguing high prices disproportionately affect working families.

“We don’t have a lot of tools in our shed,” he told KNX News Radio on Tuesday. “(My bill) would save \$1.08 per gallon the minute the governor signs it.”

So far, Gov. Gavin Newsom has voiced opposition to the proposal. Newsom stated that removing the tax would likely make oil companies more profitable rather than helping consumers. He also attributed the “sticker shock” at the pump to the Trump administration.

The rising costs have caused frustration for local drivers as prices in some parts of Southern California have reached their highest levels since 2023. Lisa Haisha, a Californian consumer, described the current prices as “insane” while fueling her vehicle.

This article originally appeared on capoliticalreview.com.

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Jordan WAMHOFF



COUNTY SUPERVISOR

Four years ago, you trusted me to deliver results—and I’ve worked tirelessly to honor that trust.

My platform remains focused: fixing and expanding roads, enhancing traffic and neighborhood safety, and ensuring infrastructure keeps pace with our rapid growth.

I played an integral role in keeping Madera Community Hospital afloat through critical support, enabling its reopening and restoring vital care. We revamped our outdated ambulance contract with strict response times and heavy penalties—cutting high-priority response from 20 minutes to 12 minutes and saving lives.

Traffic fatalities dropped 32% in the last four years and our communities remain among the safest from crime. Major road projects are underway: Avenue 15 reconstruction, Highway 41 and Avenue 12 expansion—with over \$150 million in southeastern Madera County improvements over the next three years.

Transparency and accountability have been among my highest priorities, and I’ve stayed accessible, hosting 22 community meetings and town halls to listen and act on your needs.

With endorsements from Sheriff Tyson Pogue, District Attorney Sally Moreno, Madera Deputy Sheriffs, Madera Police Officers, and many neighbors, I’m the proven leader to keep delivering.

I humbly ask for your vote on June 2.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Jordan Wamhoff'.

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3/26

Letters

Dear Editor:

I have been receiving this publication for years and I can no longer read it due to the partisan content. I wish that you could publish articles that are bi-partisan and politically neutral. The only one worth reading is *Generation Why* by Eryn B. Nyre. I can't believe that all of your readers are of one political party. To me, it is propaganda being forced on everyone. Maybe that is your intent. Though it is free and we don't have a choice whether or not we receive it, I guess I will just have to take it from my mailbox straight to the trash.

Gerald Schiebelhut
Madera Ranchos

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Guest Editorial

Democrats Desperate to Stop Save America Act

By Douglas V. Gibbs

Democrats fight to secure their own private institutions with ID, but they fight to keep the public ballot box as insecure as possible.

The Constitution makes it clear: to vote in the United States, you must be a citizen. The 15th, 19th and 26th Amendments each begin with the same powerful phrase: "The right of citizens of the United States to vote ..." They then prohibit states from denying that right based on race, sex, or age. This is not a coincidence; it is an affirmation of a self-evident truth. The answer lies not in principle, but in a calculated political strategy

These amendments were not creating a new requirement. They were protecting a pre-existing, fundamental right of national membership. The framers did not need to state "only citizens may vote" because it was a universally accepted truth of the American political order. The purpose of the amendments mentioned was to stop states from discriminating against a specific, universally understood portion of the electorate: Citizens. To argue otherwise is to reject the entire

philosophical context in which the Constitution was written, from the Saxon and Lockean foundations of natural rights to the Privileges and Immunities Clause, which Justice Bushrod Washington recognized as protecting the core privileges of citizenship.

A natural right, like the right to keep and bear arms, is understood to be exercised within the context of one's own political community. I could not go to another country and demand to own a firearm or vote in their elections. That right is a privilege of my own citizenship. The same is true for voting here in the United States. It is the ultimate expression of political membership in "We the People of the United States," a right reserved for citizens within their own country.

If this is the constitutional reality, why would anyone oppose a logical measure like the Save America Act, which simply seeks to enforce it? The answer lies not in principle, but in a calculated political strategy.

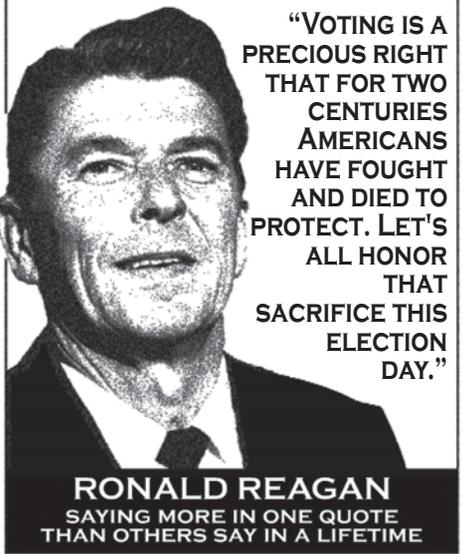
Collapsing under the weight of its own hypocrisy

Opponents of voter ID laws operate from a different set of premises, claiming they are protecting voting rights from undue burdens. They argue that requiring ID to vote is different from needing it to fly, buy alcohol or open a bank account because voting is a fundamental right, not a commercial transaction. They claim that even if the process of getting an ID is simple for most, it creates an insurmountable hurdle for a marginal few: The elderly without birth certificates, the poor who can't take time off work, or the homeless without documents.

This argument is not only growing more outdated by the day in our highly documented society, but it also collapses under the weight of its own hypocrisy.

Consider the Second Amendment. The right to keep and bear arms is unequivocally a right "of the people." Yet, the very same politicians and activists who argue that a simple ID is an unconstitutional burden on voting, champion a vast and complex web of barriers to exercising that right. They

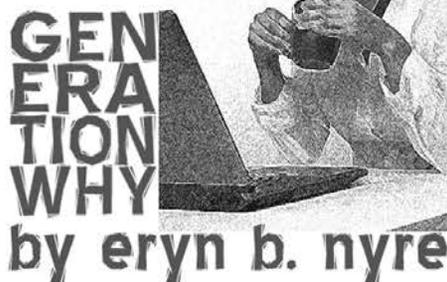
THE RAY GUN SHOOTING STRAIGHT TO THE HEART



Please see EDITORIAL on P. 12

When Helping Doesn't Help

It usually starts small. A quick question. A "Hey, can you show me how to do this in Excel?" And to be fair, Excel is not exactly intuitive. There are buttons that look important but do nothing, menus that seem to hide on purpose, and at least three different ways to accomplish the same task depending on how much time, and how much patience, you have ... and whether Excel is feeling cooperative that day.



So, you walk over, or open the file, or share your screen, and you show them. Where to click. What to type. Which formula works and which one absolutely does not unless you enjoy staring at error messages five minutes before a deadline.

Then it happens. Somewhere between explaining it for what feels like the eleventh time and feeling the deadline's breath on your neck, you hear yourself say it'll just be faster if you do it and you'll teach him after the deadline is met ... which is something you both know is never going to happen. And just like that, it not only turns into your spreadsheet, but your project.

And suddenly it feels like high school all over again and you're doing the entire group project by yourself while everyone else is "researching."

That's the pattern. A quiet, almost invisible shift in responsibility. The kind that doesn't show up in job descriptions or performance plans but shows up all the same. Not because anyone formally decided it should but because, in the moment, it was easier.

You fix something once, and then you fix it again. You answer the same question a few times, and eventually you stop answering it and just do the task yourself. Not because you were asked to, exactly, but because you know it needs to be done, and you know how to do it, and you know there's a deadline attached to it that isn't going to move just because someone is still figuring out where the formula bar is.

Work has a way of finding the person who won't let it be done poorly. Even if it isn't your team. Even if it wasn't initially your project. Heck, even if it isn't your department.

And, if I'm being honest, I don't always stop it. It's hard to stop it. Partly because you know you have a skillset that can help and it's hard to watch someone struggle with something that feels easy to you. And partly

It becomes a pattern, and patterns, once established, are hard to break because breaking them means letting something be done imperfectly.

But if you do want the pattern to break, you have to learn to let some things fall. Not every dropped ball is yours to pick up, but some of us have a hard time watching it hit the ground.

because it is often faster. Explaining something step-by-step takes time. Waiting while someone tries, gets stuck, tries again, and asks a follow-up question takes time. Fixing mistakes later takes even more time. And when you're staring at a deadline, time starts to feel like the only thing that matters.

So, you step in. The problem is, once you make it clear you won't let something fail, people stop worrying that it will.

You tell yourself it's just this once. Just this project. Just until things settle down. Just until they get more comfortable. Then the next project rolls around and that record finds its way back to the beginning. One spreadsheet turns into several. One task becomes a category of tasks. And before long, you're not sure if you're helping anyone or if you've just quietly adopted everyone else's responsibilities.

On the other side of that equation, there are always a hundred reasonable explanations. Someone is still learning. Someone hasn't had the same exposure. Someone is overwhelmed. Someone

Please see **GEN WHY** on P. 8

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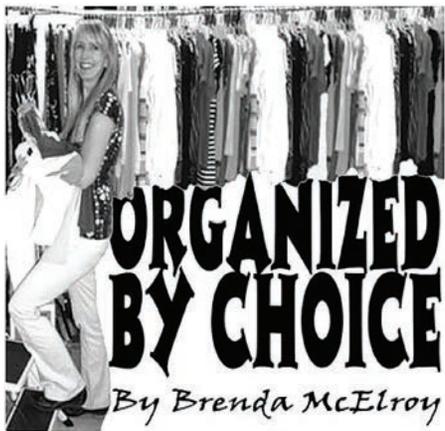
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Organizing Jewelry with Sentiment and Style

When my high school boyfriend and I started “going steady,” he gave me his class ring to wear. Soon after, we took a day trip to Pismo Beach so I could get some pictures of the pier for my photography class. The ring had yarn wrapped around it to make it fit. When I washed my hands in the beach bathroom, I took it off to keep it dry. It wasn’t until after we left that I realized I

forgot to put it back on. We hurried back but too late — it was gone. I was devastated. He kindly said, “I guess you’ll just have to go with me forever.”

For many, their most precious jewelry carries sentimental value. For others, it’s like an art collection — there’s joy in the hunt and discovery of rare and beautiful finds. Some enjoy having the right costume jewelry for every outfit.

The 80/20 rule says we wear 20 percent of the jewelry we have, 80 percent of the time. For many, it’s only the five percent that can be seen and accessed. Unless your entire jewelry collection is museum worthy and needs special security, you’d benefit from making it visible and accessible for everyday use. Here are five

steps to make that happen.

Sort - Collect and sort your jewelry on a large flat surface like a table or bed. Lay a plain sheet down if you have a patterned spread. Begin with a “macro sort” into categories — earrings, necklaces, bracelets, watches, etc.

Jewelry is designed to be worn and treasured. I learned the hard way when I lost my boyfriend’s class ring — 50 years ago.

“Micro sort” each category by separating broken items, single earrings, sentimental, costume and high value jewelry.

Determine if items are a “keep” or “let go” by asking yourself these questions. Have I worn it in the last year or two? Is it something I would buy today? Does it look and feel good on me? Does it match my current style? For pieces you’re unsure of or need repair, place them in a temporary box and date it 6-12 months later.

Let go - Choose a next step for things that didn’t make the cut. If it’s fine jewelry, consider selling to a local jeweler, consignment store, or online — eBay or Poshmark. Some broken items can also be sold for the gold/silver content. Toss the single earrings (not diamonds, of course).

Donate costume jewelry or place a few in the kids’/grandkids’ dress-up bin. Giftwrap some of the sentimental pieces and give them away to loved ones who will treasure them. Let go of

the items in the temporary box if you haven’t repaired or retrieved them by the appointed date.

Display - Honor the people and memories of your sentimental jewelry by displaying or repurposing it. Check Pinterest for creative and beautiful ideas.

Hide - Secure your fine jewelry in a safe or keep it hidden in a hollowed-out book or a Diversion Can Safe, available on Amazon. Sock drawers, the freezer, and of course jewelry boxes, are the most commonly checked by thieves.

Make accessible - Remove your daily wear jewelry from their boxes and place them where they are visible and easy to access. The hanging jewelry organizer is a favorite for keeping it with your clothes so you can accessorize while dressing. Velvet-lined open-topped jewelry dividers for shallow drawers are another easy access method. Even ice trays can make handy stackable earring holders for drawers or shelves. Necklace trees and ring dishes can be used on dresser tops.

Jewelry is designed to be worn and treasured. I learned the hard way when I lost my boyfriend’s class ring — 50 years ago. A couple of years later he replaced it with a wedding ring — which is still on my finger.

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



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Happy Easter

(March 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.



iling them at this point be sure to put them in the refrigerator.

When the eggs have been separated, put the whites in the fridge until you have the yolks ready. All I do is smash the yolks with a fork until they are kind of like corn meal. Add enough mayonnaise or Miracle Whip (I prefer Miracle Whip for most things, but in these eggs, I use half mayonnaise and half Miracle Whip) to make them moist, but not runny. If you aren't used to doing this, start with only a couple of tablespoons, and add a little at a time until you get the consistency you want. Add a squirt of mustard (not too much) and salt and pepper to

taste. Last year I added just a couple of tablespoons of sweet pickle juice. After you have the yolks tasting the way you want, put them in the whites and refrigerate until ready to

serve. I use a teaspoon to fill my whites, but a pastry bag with a pretty tip would make them more festive.

The Easter Ham

As far as the ham goes, I think everyone has their favorite glaze – and some people don't like any – but it is entirely whatever your family prefers. We drain the juice from a can of pineapple chunks into a bowl; add enough brown sugar to make a paste – not real thick – and a squirt of mustard. When the ham is almost done (about 30 minutes before it is ready) take it out of the oven and score the outside (not real deep) in diamond shapes. With toothpicks put the pineapple chunks on the ham and spoon the juice mixture over that. Put back in the oven until it is done.

When it comes to the potatoes we really cheat here! We have found that the boxed ones are good, and a lot less trouble. With our gang, usually between 15 and 20, we usually

use 10 to 12 boxes. Can you imagine peeling that many potatoes? You'd feel like you were on KP duty in the Army. We use about four disposable aluminum baking pans, cooking two pans at a time.

The balance of the meal is simple, and just whatever your family likes.

Like so many of our meals there are always plenty of desserts. Usually a coconut cake, Adam brings his always welcome pies, and I sometime make a pineapple upside down cake. There will probably be a banana pudding (I can remember my grandma always made one for Thanksgiving dinner, but she made real pudding, not the boxed ones we use today).

An Easter Favorite

My favorite Easter Hymn is *Christ Arose!* I get goose bumps when the chorus is sung, "Up from the grave he arose, with a mighty triumph o'er His foes, He arose a Victor from the dark domain, and He lives forever, with His saints to reign. He arose! He arose! Hallelujah! Christ arose!"

Have a blessed Easter.

GEN WHY cont. from P. 6

genuinely doesn't know how. And all of those things can be true at the same time. But there's also something else happening, quietly. When one person consistently steps in, someone else learns they don't have to. Perhaps it isn't malicious. It might not even be intentional, at first. It's often gradual. Responsibility doesn't always go to the person it was to whom it was assigned. It often goes to the person who notices. And once that pattern sets in, it's hard to undo.

Because now it's not just about the task. It's about the outcome. It's about the expectation that things will get done correctly, on time, without unnecessary complications. And if you're the person who has been ensuring that outcome, stepping back can feel like letting something drop that you know you could have caught. So, you keep catching it. You keep stepping in. You keep fixing. You keep smoothing over the rough edges so everything continues to move forward.

Please see GEN WHY on P. 9

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is one of the fundamental principles and beliefs of Christianity. It's why we say, "Christ is Risen – He is Risen Indeed!"

Since Easter is my favorite holiday of the year, either Christian or secular, I couldn't let it slide by without writing about it. We celebrate Easter Sunday because Jesus was crucified for our sins (John 3:16) died on the cross on Friday, was buried and rose from death on Sunday (Mark 16:6). The resurrection of Jesus Christ is one of the fundamental principles and beliefs of Christianity. It's why we say, "Christ is Risen – He is Risen Indeed!"

Our Easter Feast is real simple – Baked Ham, Scalloped Potatoes, green beans, green salad, rolls and desserts. Oh, and deviled eggs. NOT the ones that were up in a tree, behind a lawn chair or stepped on a couple of times earlier that day.

I start the eggs (I usually boil about two or three dozen) in cold water, and after they start boiling, turn the fire down and cook at a light boil for about 10 minutes. After the 10 minutes I usually test one to make sure it is done then IMMEDIATELY drain the hot water into the sink and turn the cold water onto the eggs. I let the cold water run on the eggs until you can pick up an egg easily then crack and peel them, leaving them whole. I have found this method the easiest to peel the egg without tearing it up. I have read of other methods but this one works best for me – if you have a method you have used, then by all means use it. After you have peeled them and they have cooled enough that you can handle them, cut them in half from top to bottom with a sharp paring knife, putting the yolks into a bowl and the whites on a flat surface. I have a Tupperware cake saver that I use. If you aren't going to finish dev-

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GEN WHY cont. from P. 8

And from the outside, it looks like things are working. The deadlines are met. The reports are accurate. The spreadsheets function the way they're supposed to. Everything looks fine.

Work isn't always distributed by role or responsibility. Sometimes it's distributed by tolerance, by whoever is willing to let something sit unfinished, and who isn't. And some of us have a

very low tolerance for unfinished things, which sounds like a strength right up until it isn't.

It becomes a pattern, and patterns, once established, are hard to break because breaking them means letting something be done imperfectly.

But if you do want the pattern to break, you have to learn to let some things fall. Not every dropped ball is yours to pick up, but some of us have a hard time watching it hit the ground.

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Senior Report

Home and Garden Festival Time

By Melanie Williams

This is the perfect time to prepare your garden for the spring season. Come to the 31st Annual Home and Garden Festival at the Ranchos/Hills Senior Center.

On Saturday, April 11, the Senior Center is hosting their Home and Garden Festival from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Plants will be available in the Scout Garden, along with some good advice about how to plant a beautiful spring garden. Master Gardeners are volunteering in the Scout Garden and will be available to answer questions for our springtime garden enthusiasts. The Treasure House will be open at the Home and Garden Festival this year as well and the Senior Center is selling fundraising tickets for a themed basket. The basket will be displayed in the Boutique located in the main building of the Senior Center.

Our favorite vendors are setting up booths to sell various specialty craft items and vendors include many specialty items and uniquely crafted art for the house and yard. We have locally made baked goods, candles, beautiful handcrafted jewelry and home decor items. Vendors are still welcome to sign up and participate in the festival and we have spaces available if you are interested in reserving a spot. Please contact the Ranchos/Hills Senior Center at 559-645-4864.

We are planning on having a Taco Truck with a variety of Mexican style breakfast and lunch plates during the Home and Garden Festival. There will be NO parking available at the

Ranchos/Hills Senior Center on 37330 Berkshire Drive. Parking is available along Fernwood Drive. When parking in the neighborhood, please respect the neighbors and their property. Please do not block driveways while parking vehicles.

We still need member volunteers to help on Friday, April 10 to set up tables and chairs for the festival. If you need additional information about our 31st Annual Home and Garden Festival, please call 559-645-4864 between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Our monthly potluck is on Thursday, April 9 at 6 p.m. The Spring Fling Potluck and Game Night is our theme for April. If you are feeling the joy of the new season, wear a spring hat and bright attire for the festivities. We have a fun group activity and game night planned and any senior is welcome at our monthly potluck events.

All seniors need to bring a main or side dish for eight people and their own place settings for the potluck. Homemade desserts are always welcome. If you plan to come, please call the Senior Center at 559-645-4864, so we can have enough tables set up for everyone.

The Senior Center has weekly activities every month for seniors to gather and meet other seniors in the community. Weekly activities include the Senior Exercise Classes every Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. Card and tables games every Thursday at 12:15 p.m. and the Senior Hot Lunch Program is available Monday through Friday at 11:30 a.m. We are continuing



Celebrating St. Patrick's Day at the Ranchos/Hills Senior Center are, from left, Melanie Williams and Carrie Bennett.

Please see SENIORS on P. 16

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Golden Valley Chamber

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2026 Flatlander's Day

Parade Day: Saturday, May 16, 2026

Group Individual Business

Group or Business Name _____

Individual Entry or Responsible Person's Name _____

Phone: _____

Address: _____

Theme of Entry: _____

Will youngsters walk with the entry? Yes No

Approx. number of participants _____ Approx. length _____ ft.

Entry Category (select ONE most closely suiting your entry)

- Horses (Single) Horses (Group) Explain: _____
- Band/Music Name: _____
- Floats Name: _____
- Children's Group's Name: _____
- Dance Group's Name: _____
- Single Entry (Children) Name: _____
- Single Entry (Adult) Name: _____
- Vehicle Type: _____
- Novelty Name: _____
- Additional information: _____

Parade begins at 10 a.m. sharp! • Registration of entries begins at 8:30 a.m. • Parade route: Road 36 between Ardatth to Ave. 12 in front of Liberty High

The undersigned entrant and all participants agree to abide by all parade rules, follow the directions of parade officials and agree to release parade officials from any and all responsibility from loss, damage and/or injury to any person or property as a result of participation in the parade.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Bring, fax or mail this form by **May 6** to: **Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce**
37167 Ave. 12 Ste. 5C • Madera, CA 93636 • Fax 645-4002 • Call 645-4001

Flatlanders is sponsored by the Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce.

YOU MUST TURN IN THIS FORM TO BE IN THE PARADE

The Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce would love to see you at our next meeting on Wednesday, April 15 at 6 p.m., 37167 Ave. 12 Suite 5C in the Maywood Center. Call 645-4001 for more information.

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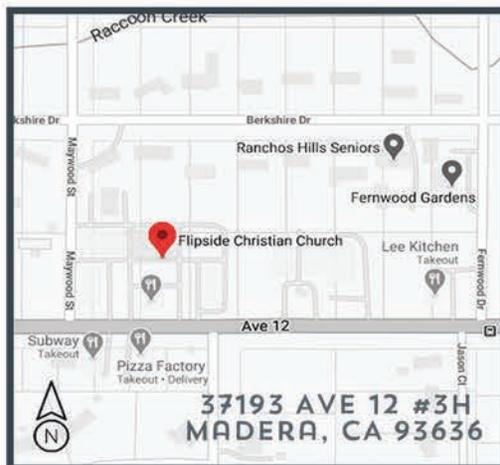
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SEE YOU SUNDAY!

EDITORIAL cont. from P. 5

support waiting periods, extensive background checks, permit-to-purchase requirements, licensing, "red flag" laws and prohibitive taxes.

If a free ID is an unconstitutional poll tax on the right to vote, what are all these other costs, delays and hurdles? By their own logic, they should be fighting to make acquiring a firearm as frictionless as possible. The fact that they don't, reveals their opposition is not a principled stand on rights, but a selective, politically motivated stance. They are fine with barriers for rights they dislike, but not for rights that benefit their political coalition. The contradiction is so glaring that it can only be explained by a desire to exploit that insecurity for electoral gain.

Furthermore, their definition of a "right" is inconsistent. Voting, in practice, functions far more like a privilege. It has built-in qualifications: You must be 18; a resident; not a felon. An inalienable right, like free speech, has no such prerequisites. If voting were a pure right with no obstacles, the logical conclusion would be that "anyone should be able to vote," a position almost no one entertains.

The most damning evidence of their hypocrisy, however, is their own behavior. These are the same people who require ID to enter their town halls, proof of party membership to attend their functions, and ID to vote in

their labor union meetings. During the COVID pandemic, they demanded proof of vaccine or a mask to participate in society, often with no exceptions for those with legitimate medical issues.

They understand perfectly well that it is reasonable, necessary and wise to require proof of identity and eligibility to protect the integrity of an institution – whether it's a political party, a union, or a hospital. They just don't want to apply that same common-sense security to the country's ballot box.

When you put these observations together, you are left with a stark conclusion: The arguments against the Save America Act are not based on a consistent principle of rights, a genuine concern for the disenfranchised, or a sincere belief in a frictionless society. They are a calculated political position.

The only remaining explanation is that these opponents of election integrity have concluded that a less secure system, one in which it is easier for ineligible votes to be cast, is in their political best interest. They fight to secure their own private institutions with ID, but they fight to keep the public ballot box as insecure as possible. The contradiction is so glaring that it can only be explained by a desire to exploit that insecurity for electoral gain.

This editorial originally appeared at www.canadafreepress.com.

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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.

	-		×		= 10				
+		+		-					
	+		+		= 11				
+		-		×					
	-		+		= 15				
=		=		=					
22		3		16					
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

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SEMUCU speaks

By Dov Adler

A Road Map to Growth: Major Infrastructure and Retail Projects Set for 2026 Completion

The local landscape of the Madera Ranchos and Riverstone is undergoing a significant transformation. From the widening of major arteries to the arrival of long-awaited retail hubs, the current slate of public works and private development marks one of the largest investment periods in our community's history. Here is a comprehensive breakdown of the projects shaping our region this year.

Transportation: Breaking the Gridlock

Infrastructure remains the top priority as crews work to accommodate increasing traffic volumes.

- **Avenue 12 Widening:** Perhaps the most visible project, construction is on track for completion by the end of this calendar year. The final layout will feature a tapering design, moving from eight lanes at Highway 41 down to two lanes west of Road 40.

- **Highway 41 Expansion:** A \$100 million project is poised to begin shortly. Fully funded by developer road impact fees, this 18-to-24-month project will eventually provide four continuous lanes from Avenue 15 into the City of Fresno.

- **Lanes Bridge Improvements:** Recent adjustments at Children's Boulevard have already improved flow. Near-term plans include dedicated turn lanes at Avenue 10 to assist commuters heading toward the southbound 41 on ramp.

- **Local Maintenance:** Avenue 15 (from Highway 41 to Road 36) is scheduled for a full reconstruction by the end of 2026.

Retail Watch: Raley's and Tractor Supply

The wait for local shopping is nearing an end. The "Riverwalk" area is seeing a surge in commercial interest:

- **Tractor Supply:** Earthwork is scheduled to begin this March. To accommodate the large building footprint, a road realignment near the Riverwalk entrance will be required. The store is

targeting a December 2026 opening.

- **Raley's:** The grocery giant has officially submitted its application, with a target opening date in the first quarter of 2027.

- **Dining & More:** Fourteen additional businesses—primarily restaurants—have applied for locations within the Riverwalk development.

Public Safety: Faster Response Times

Emergency services have seen a measurable upgrade following the county's transition to American Ambulance. Under an initiative led by Supervisor Jordan Wamhoff, maximum response times have dropped from over 20 minutes to approximately 12 minutes.

Additionally, a new fire station is being developed at Road 40 and Avenue 12 to replace the Rolling Hills station. Future capacity will also be bolstered by a new station at Avenue 9 and a dedicated engine and crew at the upcoming Highway 99 casino development.

Water Quality & Utilities

The Root Creek Water District reports that its new treatment facility is fully operational.

- **Maintenance:** While the facility addresses discoloration, some residents may notice "residual manganese" in the pipes until the system is fully flushed.

- **Rates:** In a win for residents, there will be no water rate increase for 2026.

- **Conservation:** District officials noted that high bills are typically driven by irrigation usage and encourage residents to evaluate their watering schedules.

Schools and Community Life

Education and recreation continue to expand alongside the housing market:

- **Canyon Creek Elementary:** Set to open its doors this August. Boundary adjustments are currently under review, with a focus on minimizing student displacement.

- **New Amenities:** Construction is expected to begin soon on a massive 4-acre clubhouse at Riverstone Boulevard Southwest. The facility will feature a gym double the size of the current Lodge, four gated pickleball courts, and a two-acre public event lawn.

- **Long-term Planning:** While the Ranchos middle and high schools have capacity for now, a dedicated Riverstone Middle School is being projected for 2033.

Along with others, SEMCU is a nonprofit organization that represents the interests of the residents, property own-

ers and businesses in Southeast Madera County. Its concerns, among other issues, are our community, safety, water, traffic, schools, future parks and energy. Join SEMCU as a board member 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. 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 by the access code 85422. Our next meeting: Tuesday, April 21 at 6 p.m. "See you online" and make your voice heard!

SEMCU is "By the community, for the community"

Kiwanis Korner

Kiwanis take "Serving" to Next Level

By Sally Rowden

I'm starting this article out with a huge thank you to our Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce for a very successful Crab Feed. As the servers of this community event, we were also awarded success by generous tips from the sold-out tables of attendees. This allows us to be able to support our many projects, events and scholarships for the children of our communities. Thank you all.

The kindergarten children of Sierra View Elementary School visited Storyland on Thursday, March 5. This is our first group of kindergarteners to have all entrance fees covered by the Kiwanis Children's Fund Microgrant we applied for and received. Our member, Richard Wayne, traveled to Storyland to meet the children, parents and teachers. Stone Creek Elementary will be headed to Storyland in April with Webster Elementary going in May.

Our John Minney-Liberty High School Scholarship fundraiser is going

well. Several of our local businesses and individuals have big-heartedly given. If you would like to contribute, please use our Venmo QR Code and make sure you describe the transaction: JM-LHS Scholarship. These scholarships will be awarded this May. Liberty High School graduating seniors should contact their school office or school counselors to obtain scholarship applications.

We will be at the Ranchos Seniors 31st Home and Garden Festival on Saturday, April 11. A beautiful Mother's Day Raffle Basket will be on display for you to peruse and obtain raffle tick-

ets. This is always a great community event to find special treasures. So come on out, get your raffle tickets and see what treasures you can find for yourself.

Just a reminder that we are now meeting at the Pizza Factory on Avenue 12. We meet every second and fourth Thursday of the month. The meeting starts at 6 p.m. You're welcome to join or if you would like more information about Kiwanis, you can email Sally



Again, Kiwanis members were the table servers at the 22nd Annual Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce Community Crab Feed in March.

Please see **KIWANIS** on P. 16



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KIWANIS cont. from P. 13

Rowden at rowdensally2@gmail.com.

Most of us are very busy folks and volunteering can be a challenge. There is an opportunity to support all our community projects, events and scholarships from your own home. Use our Venmo QR Code and send a donation. Remember all donations are tax deductible and the children of our communities will be the benefactors of your generosity.

In closing, I'm going to share a quote highlighting our spring season. *"Spring is nature's way of saying, 'Let's Party!'"* - Robin Williams

Madera Ranchos Kiwanis

@MaderaRanchos-Kiwanis



venmo

SENIORS cont. from P. 9

to sign up seniors who want to participate in the program. It is quick and easy to sign up at the Senior Center.

Chair Yoga is a new activity on every Thursday from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. Line Dancing is a favorite for people who wish to learn the steps for popular country songs. The Line Dancing Class is every other Wednesday from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m.

Brown Bag Day is on April 22 from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

The Indian Basket Weaving Class members sit and visit as they learn how to weave beautiful baskets with pine needles. The Ranchos "Basket Cases" meet on the first and last Tuesday each month at 9 a.m.

to 11 a.m.

The members of the RH Seniors want to thank some special contributors for making the Senior Center a wonderful gathering place for our local seniors: Judy Sears, who organizes the Home and Garden Festival every year; Ellen Williams, who keeps participants updated with Line Dancing schedules and videos; and Kathleen House, who opens the Treasure House on Brown Bag Day for the Senior Center. Thank you for your generous donations and talents to support our local Senior Center.

Happy Easter from the members of the Ranchos/Hills Senior Center.

Quote for April: *"Springtime is the land awakening. The March winds are the morning yawn."* - Lewis Grizzard

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- When you make a meringue, be sure to spread it all the way to the crust on all sides. If you do, it won't shrink.
- "Newspaper bags are handy hand covers in many situations. Keep them close if you are painting, doing a DIY art project, working in the shop with sticky or greasy materials or baking and working with dough. If you are interrupted, simply slip a bag over your hands to answer the phone or door, etc. It's much quicker than washing and drying your hands, and you can go right back to it once you have dealt with the interruption." -- W.A. in Oregon
- "To clean burned-on bits from your cast iron skillet, scrub with a plastic scrubbie and salt as an abrasive. Dry immediately and rub with oil to keep moist." -- R.T. in Ohio
- Metal shower hooks can be used in the sewing basket to hold safety pins. They can be used in a jewelry box to corral costume rings as well.
- "Line the edges of a plastic shower curtain on both sides with duct tape. Then snip out a few holes through the tape edging. You can use the holes to tie the plastic stretched out between trees for a wind break or as a quick shelter from the rain. You can tie bagged sand to the corners as a car cover. Stake it to the ground under your blanket to avoid ground moisture. Lots of possibilities." -- F.C. in Georgia

Now here's a tip! by Jo Ann Derson

Send your tips to
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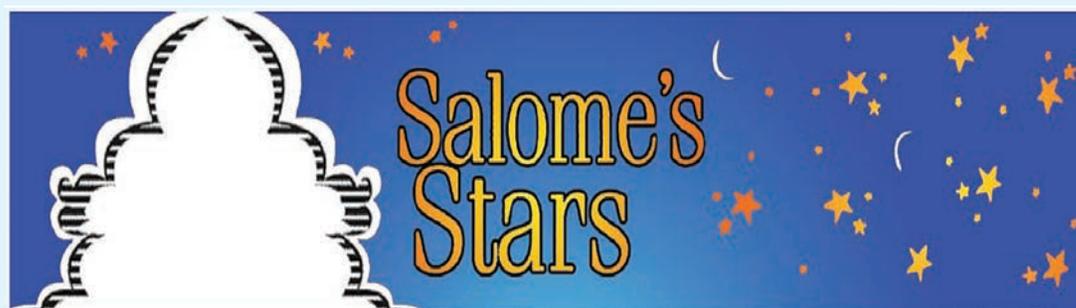
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Just Like Cats & Dogs

by Dave T. Phipps



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ARIES (March 21 to April 19) This week offers new opportunities for adventurous Sheep, both personally and professionally. Single Sheep could find romance with a TAURUS or SCORPIO.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20) Your big break is about to happen in the workplace. Expect to hear more about it within a few days. Meanwhile, enjoy some much-needed fun time.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20) Your past tendency for breaking promises could be catching up with you. You need to reassure a certain someone in your life that, this time, you'll keep your word. Good luck!

CANCER (June 21 to July 22) Watch your tendency to be overcautious in your personal relationships. Give people a chance to show who they are -- not who you assume them to be.

LEO (July 23 to August 22) Aspects favor closer attention to family matters, especially where it concerns older relatives who might need special care. A co-worker has information that can help.

VIRGO (August 23 to September 22) A workplace change causes a temporary delay in your plans. Continue working on your project so that you'll be ready when it's time to start up again.

LIBRA (September 23 to October 22) Stick with your plans despite some recent disappointments. Persistence will pay off. Meanwhile, a family member's health takes a happy turn for the better.

SCORPIO (October 23 to November 21) Your gift for seeing through to the heart of a matter (or the heart of a person) impresses someone who is in a position to make you a very interesting offer.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22 to December 21) Your colleagues believe in your leadership abilities because you believe in yourself. Your strength inspires others to follow your example.

CAPRICORN (December 22 to January 19) A sensitive situation needs careful handling. Show more patience than you usually do. This will allow everyone time for some really hard thinking.

AQUARIUS (January 20 to February 18) You are determined to take charge of a difficult situation and turn it around. Good for you! Accept much-needed help and advice from a LIBRA.

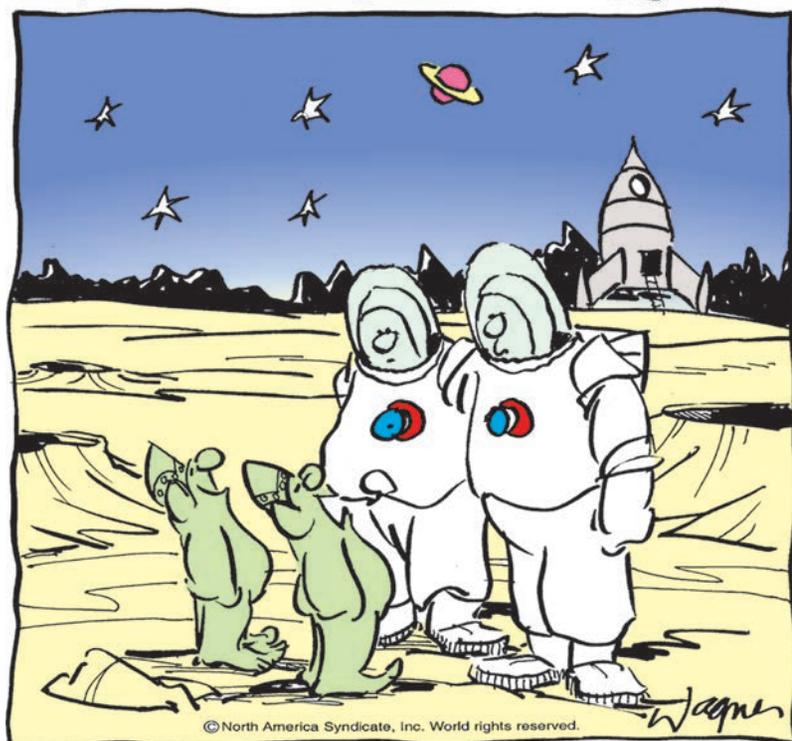
PISCES (February 19 to March 20) You are able to help people by sensing their deepest pain, but be careful not to let your own emotions get injured. Try to maintain a safe balance.

Born this Week

Not many people know this, but yours is the most emotional sign of the zodiac. You are empathetic and have a deep spiritual core that gives you great strength.

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GRIN and BEAR IT Wagner

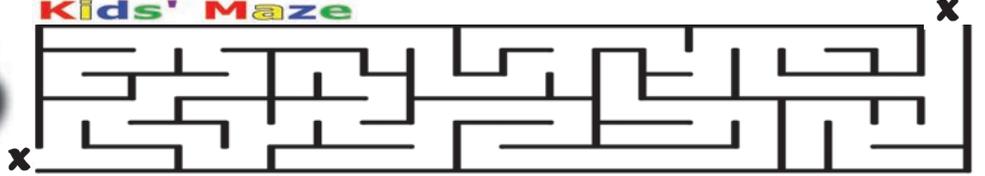


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"You guys really wear diapers?"

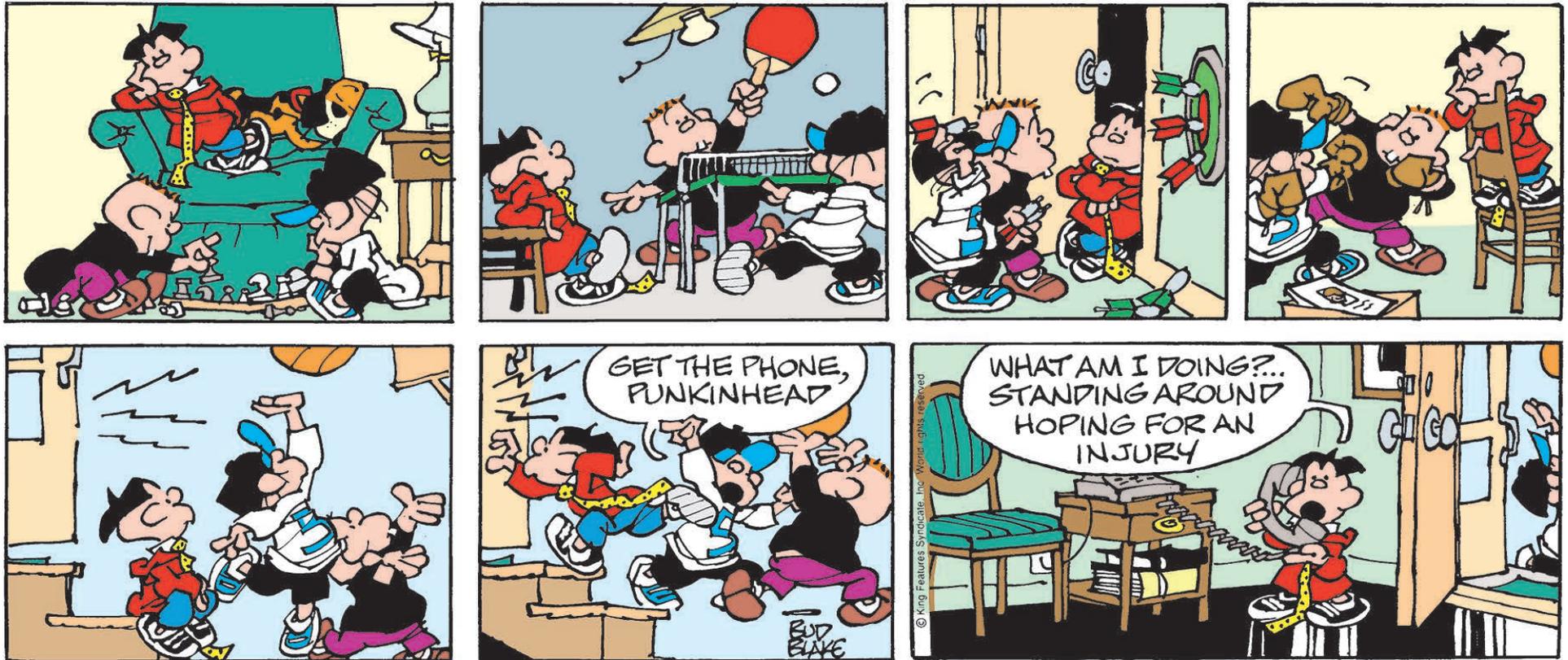
FUN PAGES

Kids' Maze



TIGER

by BUD BLAKE



TRIVIA TEST

By Fifi Rodriguez

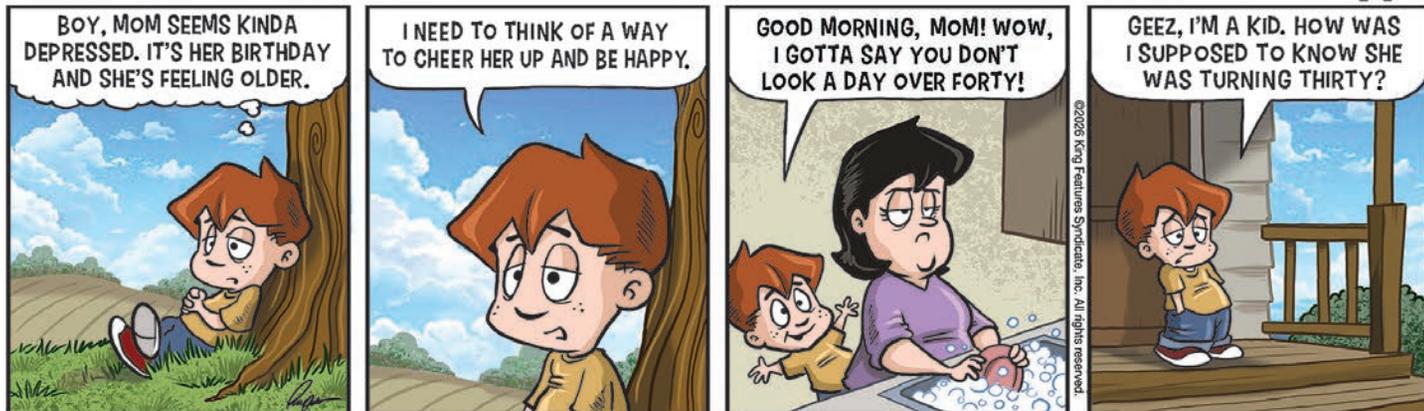
- MOVIES:** Who is the director of the Oscar-winning movie "Parasite"?
- FOOD & DRINK:** What is miso?
- LITERATURE:** What are the names of the romantic couple in "Wuthering Heights"?
- GENERAL KNOWLEDGE:** Which city's nickname is "Pearl of the Orient"?
- HISTORY:** In what year were the first modern Olympic Games held?
- U.S. PRESIDENTS:** Before becoming president, Barack Obama served as a senator from which state?
- GEOGRAPHY:** Which peninsula is the largest in the world?
- MYTHOLOGY:** Who is the Greek god of war?
- MUSIC:** Who composed the opera "The Ring of Nibelung"?
- ACRONYMS:** In computer emails, what does the acronym "CC" stand for?



- Bong Joon Ho.
- Fermented soybean paste.
- Heathcliff and Catherine.
- Manila, Philippines.
- 1896 in Greece.
- Illinois.
- Arabian Peninsula.
- Ares.
- Richard Wagner.
- Carbon Copy (once used in typewriters).

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. Differences: 1. Hair is different. 2. Briefcase is different. 3. Vest is missing. 4. Elbow patch is added. 5. Newspaper is larger. 6. Bush is moved.

SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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

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

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

- Art
- Bonds
- Checking
- Cookie jar
- Crypto
- Freezer
- Mattress
- Money belt
- Piggy bank
- Purse
- Safe
- Savings
- Stocks
- Vault
- Wallet

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