

The Ranchos Independent



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35¢

Ranchos Valero Station Robbed

On Tuesday, Nov. 14 at some time between midnight and 4 a.m., the Valero gas station at 37047 Ave. 12 was broken into and was robbed. Madera County Sheriff's department stated that they responded to an alarm from the station and when they arrived discovered the front door glass had been broken out and the contents of the convenience store had been disturbed. They determined that the cash register had been stolen with an undiscovered amount of money.

The sheriff's department had no other information but said that the case is open and still under investigation.

Rolling Hills H₂O Woes

The Rolling Hills Homeowners' Association met on Thursday, Nov. 16 for a full agenda of items, but it was water that was on everyone's mind. At question is an aging water system that services the approximate 350 residential parcels in the area around Highway 41 that stretches from Ave. 12 to Children's Hospital. Several homeowners saw the writing on the wall three years ago when groups were formed to investigate solutions and costs to fix the system, but those efforts were not acted upon. Today, the water system is worsening and the costs have gone up considerably since 2003, some estimating from the original \$1.7 million to possibly \$5 million today.

A special election will be held in March 2007 for property owners and, if approved, construction could begin within a year. If it's rejected, the project dies and the situation, presumably, will worsen.

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LHS Friday Night-mare Ends Dream Season

By Randy Bailey

In an absolute heartbreak of a game, the Firebaugh Eagles scored a go-ahead touchdown with less than a minute left to play and brought to an end an unbelievable season for the Liberty High Hawks with a score of 35-31.

In front of a crowd estimated in the thousands, the Division V Semifinal game was played on Friday, Nov. 17 between the #1 ranked Hawks and the #4 ranked Eagles. But this game meant more than being just a step closer to the ultimate division championship. In what many considered to be a storybook season in which Liberty High beat opponents mercilessly into the ground with scores like 56-7, 49-6 and 41-8, the only team that beat them their entire season was Firebaugh, and at that the best Firebaugh could do was eke out only four more points than Liberty. With that win, although Liberty had more overall victories than Firebaugh, they were tied in their conference games at 4-1 each and that gave Firebaugh the #1 spot in the Northwest Sierra League.

This game was about much more than getting to the finals; it was about payback.

The game truly was a study of two different games. There was the first half game, completely dominated by Liberty with a score of 28-6 at halftime. Firebaugh scored once in the first quarter after Liberty had already scored two touchdowns, the first a 19-yard run by Brandon Graham and the second a 50-yard run by Donovan Tessmer. Firebaugh didn't enter the endzone again until the third quarter of play.



Say it ain't so!

The faces of the Liberty High School Varsity Football Team say it all at the end of one of the most intensely fought games in school history. After losing only one game all season to Firebaugh, Friday night's championship game with Firebaugh - again - would determine who would move on to the Division V Championship Game with Caruthers. After leading the game for the first three quarters, Liberty watched Firebaugh mount a last-ditch effort that resulted in a final score of 35-31.

Photo by Tyler Takeda

But this is a story of two football games played that night. In the second half, Firebaugh did score a touchdown ... and then another, and another, and another. And all the while this was happening, all the second half Liberty High Hawks could put on the board was one 40-yard Brandon Schlueter field goal.

But there's more to Firebaugh's second half magic and Liberty's second half implosion than meets the eye.

For most of the game, the officiating was right on. However, in the fourth quarter Liberty had its wind knocked out with three pass interference calls in a row, advancing Firebaugh 45 yards in three plays and placing them on the Liberty 2 yard line from where they scored. These calls came after an 80-yard

Liberty touchdown was called back for holding.

But more importantly, after the flags were thrown there was a palpable change in Liberty's defensive secondary. "Gun shy" would not be too strong of an adjective. After the penalties Liberty started to give the Firebaugh receivers more than enough room and Firebaugh, to their credit, exploited it.

And exploit it they did. In the first half, Firebaugh's quarterback Alex Gutierrez' passing numbers were MIA, but by the end of the second half he had amassed 159 yards by completing 11 of 21 passes.

Liberty's strength was its running game. Graham ended the night with 183 yards rushing on 17 carries, for an average of almost 11 yards per carry. Talk

about a first down machine. Graham's rushing alone was within 23 yards of the total rushing yards for Firebaugh's entire team. When you add in Donovan Tessmer's 4 carries for 75 yards, the ground was controlled by Liberty.

In an interesting twist, Friday's game was the second time this year that Firebaugh beat Liberty High by only 4 points.

What a season. Liberty High has made us all incredibly proud. Most kids go through four years of mediocrity and look back on it and call it their high school years. This team will be able to look back on a season that went further than any other Liberty football team and also set an incredibly high standard for those returning lettermen next year.

We can't wait.

Ranchos Voters Elect GV Board Members



Elected School Board members (from left) Steven Lewis, Mona Diaz and Roger Schuh.

In a vote for the status quo, both incumbents, Mona Diaz and Roger Schuh, were reelected Nov. 7 to the Golden Valley Unified School District Board of Trustees. Of the three remaining non-board members running, Steven Lewis, Brad McDonald and Mark Toole, the voters chose Lewis for the 4-year seat.

Diaz was the #1 vote getter, receiving almost 26 percent of the votes cast. Schuh was next with 21 percent. Of the three other contenders, there was only 4 percentage points separating them. Lewis won with 19.8 percent of the vote followed by McDonald with 18.2 percent and Toole with 15.3 percent.

Planning Committee Meets For New Ranchos Library

By Julie Hale

On Wednesday, Nov. 15, the first meeting was held to start up a committee to work toward the goal of building a new library for the Ranchos area. The current library is located in leased space in the Maywood shopping center on Avenue 12 at Maywood. The first meeting was attended by 27 interested Ranchos residents. Committee officers elected were Mark Swan, who will chair the committee; Stephen Bibler, who was elected as the co-chair; Julie Hale, who was elected as secre-

tary; and Cheryl Harvat, who was elected as Treasurer. There was also discussion that the committee will start up as an ad-hoc committee which will be associated with the "Friends of the Library" group. This will allow the committee to take advantage of the already established non-profit corporation of the "Friends of the Library." The next meeting will be on Nov. 29 at 7 p.m. at the library to discuss the possible donation of land to the county for the future library site. Anyone interested in participating in the committee is welcomed to attend.



Editorial

Voting Irregularities? No Way ... Not When Democrats Win

I was poised by my TV set on election night, waiting for what they’ve conditioned me to expect after an election: election impropriety. Someone “stealing the election” again. I was ready for the non-stop, wall to wall barrage from the talking heads on TV to explain to me who had been disenfranchised this election. I was prepared to get beat over the head again over stories of pranksters calling certain voters and telling them that the election had been moved to the next day and that they wouldn’t be needed to vote until the day *after* the election. Of stories about voters being intimidated - always by the same party - into not voting.

Prior to the election I heard the same tired clap trap that a vote for THIS party would equal lynchings and churches burning and voting for that same party would ensure that the lame would never walk again ... blah, blah, blah.

So along comes election night and what happens?

Nothing.

No angry voters. No disenfranchised minorities. No imbeciles from Palm Beach, Fla.

What was happening? Had I entered an alternative universe somehow? Every election I had watched since 2000 there were major problems. Foul-ups. Uncounted voters. Hanging chads.

What was going on?

Then I started to notice the returns as they trickled in. A Democrat here. Two there. Another one way over there someplace. As I tried to control my instinctive gag reflex, I started putting two and two together.

There was nothing to complain about because THEY were winning.

And then it all started coming back to me. When Bill Clinton was elected he was going to put together a cabinet that “looked” like America. Things were finally going to get done because he was the king of bipartisanship. It was then that we learned that “bipartisan” meant “agree with the Democrats.” If you agreed with a Democrat, you were exhibiting the finest qualities of bipartisanship. Now a Democrat could staunchly disagree with you, but that was because their positions were always inherently correct. There was nothing partisan about supporting and championing truth.

So there you had it: 1) Agree with them = Bipartisan, the highest form of political creature; 2) Disagree with them = Partisan knuckle-dragger throwing a roadblock into all things good and pure and progressive; and 3) Have them disagree with you = Protector of the Faith, even higher than Bipartisan.

And now it’s all coming together in this election.

They had their scores of lawyers at the ready to start challenging absolutely everything if they had lost, but there was no need to this time. They were winning.

Which all comes down to my point. It’s only a “bad” election if they lose. Am I the only one who sees this? Does anyone else smell a huge pile of disingenuousness? Of course, I don’t know why I’m complaining. If I would just shut up and do what they say - like our friends in the Northeast did - everything will be fine. Really.

The Ranchos Independent

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Random Notes

The good folks over at the Golden Valley Unified District Office wanted me to pass along some well-deserved thank yous to some volunteers that, in their words, “... have been awesome in their offers of time and equipment to help prepare Liberty High School football field for the Liberty/Firebaugh playoff game.” They say that the community really pulled together to offer their help, “... they have been awesome, enthusiastic and willing to do whatever it took to ensure that the players and all who attended had a positive and memorable experience.”

Specifically, they wanted to thank Karl Roth, Don Foster, Brian Kirste, Pat Knobloch, Darrell Graham and Darrell Graham Sr., Theresa Graham, John Pearson, Christine Pearson, Scott Sample, Yosemite High School and their MOT Director Kevin, Chowchilla High School and their Superintendent Ron Seals, Golden Valley staff Jesus Garcia, Art Hernandez and Susan Lunt.

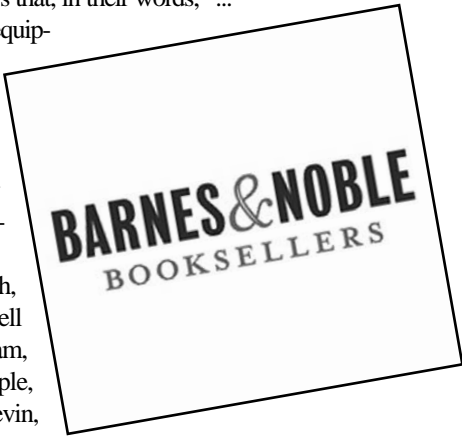
LHS Principal Andy Alvarado stated, "It is absolutely evident that our schools in the Golden Valley USD are a source of community pride. It never ceases to amaze me how our community rallies together to support all of our programs here at Liberty High School."

Golden Valley has a very cool system in place if you’re a parent and want to get a look at your kid’s grades without having to wait for a progress report or report card. It’s called PAMS or Parent Account Management System. You can check grades or even check on how many days your child has missed school due to illness.

It uses the same database that teachers use to input attendance and grades, only now it’s been made accessible to parents. If you would like access to the PAMS system, you need to go by the District Office at 37479 Avenue 12 during normal business hours (7:30 – 4:30) in order to sign up for your verification pass code. You can get more information at the District Website at www.gvUSD.k12.ca.us or call Chris Pierce at 645-7500.

As long as I’m talking about school-related stuff, Liberty High School is having a little fundraiser for the school library. On Saturday, Dec. 9 they’re having a Book Fair at Barnes & Noble across from River Park. You can get a Book Fair Voucher at Liberty High School and at the GVUSD District Office. Present the voucher when you make your purchases at Barnes & Noble (7849 N. Blackstone Ave.) on Dec. 9 and the LHS library will receive a percentage of all profits from purchases made with the vouchers. The profit will be used to purchase new books for the library. Want a bonus? Gift wrapping will be provided by LHS students and staff from 2 - 6 p.m.

Finally, as I round out this GVUSD Random Notes, you can meet with the Superintendent, Dr. Marilyn Shepherd, on the first Thursday of each month over coffee. It’s called “Starbucks with Shepherd.” It’s at the District Office from 7:45 to 8:45 a.m. How’s that for access?



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The Olde Cowboy

By Woody Laughnan

My longtime neighbor three miles up the road toward town is cleaning out three generations of accumulation from his farmstead preparatory to holding a farmyard sale in November, and his missus is going through boxes and trunks that have not been opened for years; in fact she's been emptying closets in upstairs rooms whose doors have not been open in 20 years as is the case in many rambling old farm houses that pre-date the 1920s.

Her sorting job is taking much more time than his.

Sometimes I come into a room and find her holding an object to the cheek and crying, for instance an old doll that we bought for our oldest daughter on her first Christmas 40 years ago. And a pitcher and knickknacks that her grandmother brought from Ireland more than a hundred years ago. I don't know, but sometimes it is more difficult for a woman to look back on yesterday, although I was all but moved to tears when I found my son's tricycle in what was once the tack room in the horse barn that hasn't been used for years. I guess I'm getting old because the adage is that men don't cry.

Anyhow, the neighbor put his place up for sale a couple of months ago, not that he was doing much with it anymore except running a few head of cows and putting up some hay. Oh, the wife and he had a few chickens, a couple of hogs and a garden that didn't get much tending this year.

At one time theirs was a busy farm, even employing a year around hired man; and until a labor camp was built

Please see COWBOY on Page 11

Letters

Dear Editor:

Of the many controversial issues the nation is facing, one item surely demands prompt action: raise the minimum wage. The income of the richest 1 percent of the population has risen sharply in recent years while wages and ownership among the working class have eroded. Congress has raised its own salaries several times in the last 10 years, but has steadfastly refused to raise the minimum wage over the same period. We have been told that to increase the minimum wage will destroy countless small businesses, and hurt the poor because of lost jobs and rising prices. That is a sobering thought, but is it true? In the grocery business, since wages take about 10 percent of the sales dollar, a price hike of only 10¢ on a \$10 order would accommodate a 10 percent wage increase. And remember, for the most part the working poor and the non-working poor are in the same families.

Think for a moment about the furniture manufacturing and retailing industry. No one can doubt that in terms of supply and demand, the industry is overstocked. Television tells the story constantly, with a plethora of “no down payment, no interest till ‘08, no sales tax, etc.” In automobiles, it’s “cash back, low or no interest!” There is plenty of need, all right, but for “demand” to serve its essential function, the buyer must be able to pay the price.

Suppose we put more money into the hands of the furniture industry by favorable tax cuts. Now in view of the fact that the industry already has goods it cannot sell, does common sense tell you that the industry will rush out to invest in more capacity, and hire more workers? No, it does not. If we put more money into the hands of the wealthy by more tax cuts, will they rush out to buy down the overstocks

of furniture? No, they will not, because if they thought they needed furniture, they already bought it yesterday.

Now consider the working class. If we put a little more money into their hands, what do you suppose they will do with it? Will they buy long-term bonds, yachts, a third vacation home in Bermuda? No, they will not. They will spend it immediately on furniture, ordinary clothing, more trips to Carl's Jr., better used cars, etc., etc.

And the major beneficiaries of the additional purchasing power will be the very people the opponents of raising the minimum wage claim will be hurt: the fast food chains and small retailers in general.

And would that be good for everybody? Yes, it would.

Fred Mathes
Madera Ranchos

Dear Editor:

I don't smoke. I have, in my younger and foolish days, smoked and done other such foolish things. My grandparents both smoked. In fact, my Aunt nicknamed my grandmother Puff, because of her frequent habit. (My brother and I thought she was named after Puff the Magic Dragon and to this day we still call her Puff.)

Yes, I did say smoking was foolish. Cancer is the second leading cause of death with lung cancer the leading cause of all cancer deaths. In 2003, about 170,000 new lung cancer cases occurred and about 157,000 people died from lung cancer (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.) It seems foolish to think smoking is anything but foolish. But why do smokers always seem to bear the brunt of American animosity and taxation? Shouldn't we be celebrating diversity and

appreciating our differences? Diversity is, after all, a pressing issue of our time.

In the worst sense diversity means group preferences and group entitlements; it values group identity above individual identity. In the best sense diversity means accepting and appreciating differences – but not if the difference is smoking.

Why?
Since diversity proponents are opposed to individualism and without individualism there is no personal responsibility, it seems that smokers would qualify as a group worthy of entitlements. But this is not the case. The diversity police do not allow the smoking minority their own personal responsibility even though smokers want it. And that's the crux of the issue: wanting or not wanting personal responsibility. Smokers, for the most part, are willing to face the consequences of their choice to smoke. Special groups that are worthy of the benefits of being diverse do not want personal responsibility. These groups, for the most, are not willing to face the consequences of their particular choices, and generally hide behind the larger group identity.

Thus, to truly be diverse in the diversity crowd — and get the benefits — you must denounce personal responsibility and oppose individualism. To do otherwise, even when you might belong to a diverse group, disqualifies you from receiving group entitlements and raises your taxes.

If you want to be responsible you lose benefits. If you claim not to be responsible you gain benefits. So here is a tip for smokers: denounce personal responsibility and claim smoking is not your fault. Packs of cigarettes will be under \$2 in no time.

Ray M. Sanchez
Madera Ranchos

Castle & Cooke invites you to a Townhall Meeting to discuss the status and progress of The Village of Gateway

The most current Draft Environmental Impact Report has been prepared and we hope you can join us for a discussion of the possible effect the report may have on the advancement of the Village of Gateway project. It should prove to be both an interesting and informative evening.

Thursday, November 30, 2006
7:00 p.m.

Townhall to be held at the Liberty High School Cafeteria
located on the corner of Ave. 12 and Road 36 • Refreshments will be served

Holiday Fun at Ranchos Library

By Ellen Mester

It's time once again to plan and celebrate the holidays! Are you in need of some really excellent and economical Christmas gifts? Try doing your holiday shopping at the Friends of the Ranchos Library Book Sale that will be on Dec. 1 through 3 in the vacant office space that used to be the community hall/voting place in the Maywood Center. The Book Sale will continue on the following weekend, Dec. 8, 9 and 10. You'll find first edition recently released novels in perfect condition for incredible prices. Think about paperbacks as stocking stuffers for those hard-to-buy-for relatives. The Book Sale will begin on the same day (Dec. 1), same location as the annual Christmas Tree Lighting that the Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce is hosting. There will be food and drinks for the family, music, Santa and lots of holiday cheer. Rain or shine we hope to see everyone there.

All of the staff and Friends of the Ranchos Library wish you a Happy Thanksgiving!

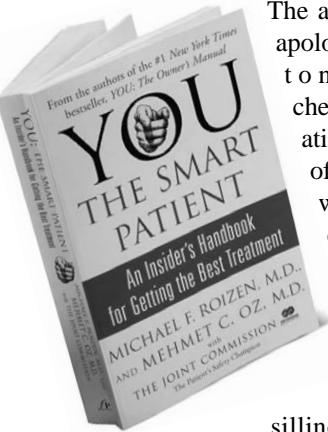
On Dec. 7, the Friends of the Ranchos Library will host our annual Christmas Tree Decorating party inside the library. This is a great opportunity to visit with your neighbors and enjoy some tasty treats while you're helping to decorate the library. Every other Tuesday at 10:30 a.m. a wonderful group of children meet at the library for a book club. At each meeting books are selected based on a theme. The following meeting the children talk about their chosen books and what they liked about them. Then the new theme is discussed and books are selected. It's a great opportunity for kids of all ages. The sign-up sheet is at the circulation desk in the library.

Book Recommendations

Juvenile Fiction: Thanksgiving Wish by Michael J. Rosen. Every year Amanda's family gathers at her grandmother's house for Thanksgiving. Grandmother has spent the entire month of November preparing food for the feast. And every year Grandmother has saved wishbones from all the chickens and turkeys eaten throughout the year for all of her grandchildren to make wishes. The first Thanksgiving arrives after Grandmother has passed away and the family tries to prepare the traditional feast without Grandmother's help. This turns out quite comical when the electricity goes out and

the food is not quite cooked. Fortunately the neighbors lend a hand and Amanda's family has a very special Thanksgiving after all. It is so reminiscent of some of my family's holiday gatherings that I find this book to be especially endearing and I imagine many would feel the same way. It's a picture book that can be read and enjoyed by the whole family.

Large Print Adult Non-fiction: You the Smart Patient: an Insider's Handbook for Getting the Best Treatment written by Michael F. Roizen, M.D. and Mehmet C. Oz, M.D. Although the title sounds serious this book was actually written in a light-



hearted manner. The authors even apologize for the tongue-in-cheek exaggerations of some of healthcare workers or cases they discuss. Despite the funny cartoons and silliness they actually offer practical advice which is their true intent. They begin with a quiz to see how smart you already are. It's quite funny and easy to do. Then they give the answers and discuss some of the key points. They also give several good Websites for information so that you can be prepared to ask the right questions when you go to the doctor and websites to help you find a specialist in your area. There are also pointers on what to do before you have surgery and how to understand the doctor's shorthand instructions or prescriptions. It's written in big bold print with appendix and index at the back. An excellent read not only for seniors but for everyone.

Adult Non- Fiction: Frommer's Europe by Rail: the Official Guide of RailEurope. If you are thinking about traveling to Europe in the near future I recommend this book. It is current (2006) and can help you plan your entire trip from hotels, sites to see,

restaurants, train schedules (and how to understand them), maps, prices and pictures of what the inside of the trains look like. There are loads of addresses and phone numbers to book accommodations and practical travel tips as well. For those of you who are looking for an economical way to see several countries then this is the book for you.

All of the staff and Friends of the Ranchos Library wish you a Happy Thanksgiving! Check out these books and more at the library and remember your library card ... don't leave home without it!

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11/06

The Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce

Annual Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony

Maywood Shopping Center

Friday, December 1 • 6:30 p.m.

Santa will make an appearance at the ceremony!

Cookies - Coffee - Hot Cider

Pick a star for a Veteran at Veteran's Hospital.*

Photos with Santa for a \$5 donation.

Christmas carols by Flipside Church and area Girl Scouts.

*Gift items needed are lap blankets, socks, toothpaste, toothbrushes, books, magazines, L and XL t-shirts, shampoo and instant coffee. The items need to be dropped off at the Chamber office before December 14.

The Ranchos Kiwanis are also collecting toys for the children of our troops. Bring a toy to the Christmas Tree lighting and it will be delivered to a deserving child.

for more information, contact the Golden Valley Chamber at 645-4001

Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce 37167 Ave. 12 #5C • Madera Ranchos

Say You Saw It in The Ranchos Independent

OHV Riders: Heed “No Trespassing” or Risk Arrest



In Sheriff John Anderson's zero tolerance concerning illegal OHV (Off Highway Vehicle) riding, NO TRESPASSING signs are going up, which means no one caught violating Madera County OHV Ordinances can feign ignorance of the law.

"Drivers caught breaking the law risk arrest and having their vehicle impounded," Anderson said.

Anderson has not only issued warnings, he has tried to educate the public about the seriousness of violating county OHV Ordinances. Despite his efforts, there are those who continue to flout the law.

In the department's continued attempt to tackle the problem, Sheriff's Deputies with the OVH Team & Ag Crimes Task Force began posting signs along the Fresno River. More signs will go up in areas where the problem of illegal OHV riding continues.

Sheriff Anderson does not begrudge those who own OHV's – whether they are ATV's or off-road motorcycles. "Ride them in areas that are designated OHV paths. Do not ride them in areas deemed off limits," Anderson said.

Madera County drafted and put into effect a Noise Ordinance Law, "But it's

not just the noise that's impacting residents and business owners in our county," Anderson said. "OHV's are responsible for damaging agricultural land, stirring up dust clouds, which contribute to extremely poor air quality in our Valley."

Again, those who choose to ride OHV's anywhere in Madera County are urged find out where it is legal to ride. To do so log on to the Madera County web site at: www.madera-county.com/sheriff/ohv/index.html. This county web site not only provides pertinent information about OHV riding and safety, it also serves as an educational tool for those who need to familiarize themselves with Madera County's OHV Codes.



The OHV Team & AG Crime Task Force are (from left) Ag Crimes Detective Bud Smith, OHV Team Deputy Dan Kerber, OHV Team Leader Deputy Larry Rich and Ag Crimes Detective Cliff Kirkes.

Madera Co. Speech Winners

More than 100 junior high students from 14 schools in Madera County competed at the Academic Pentathlon Speech Competition on Oct. 17.

Rachel Oatman from Chawanakee Academy received first place in the Academic Pentathlon seventh grade speech competition.

North Fork student, Kazia Hart placed first place in the eighth grade competition.

Julia Hall of Ranchos Middle School received second place and Dana Wood from North Fork Elementary came in third place in the seventh grade competition.

Eighth graders, Hannah Pludow and Skyler Towle, both students at North Fork Elementary received second and third place in the competition.

"I am amazed at the students' ability to articulate," said Jennifer Girado, a speech judge volunteer. "Speaking in front of people can be daunting and these students did a wonderful job."

The Academic Pentathlon is a five event competition. The other four events are Essay/Literature, Math, Destination Imagination and Super Quiz. The Super Quiz will be held on April 26, 2007. The public is welcome to attend this event and the awards ceremony immediately following the Super Quiz.

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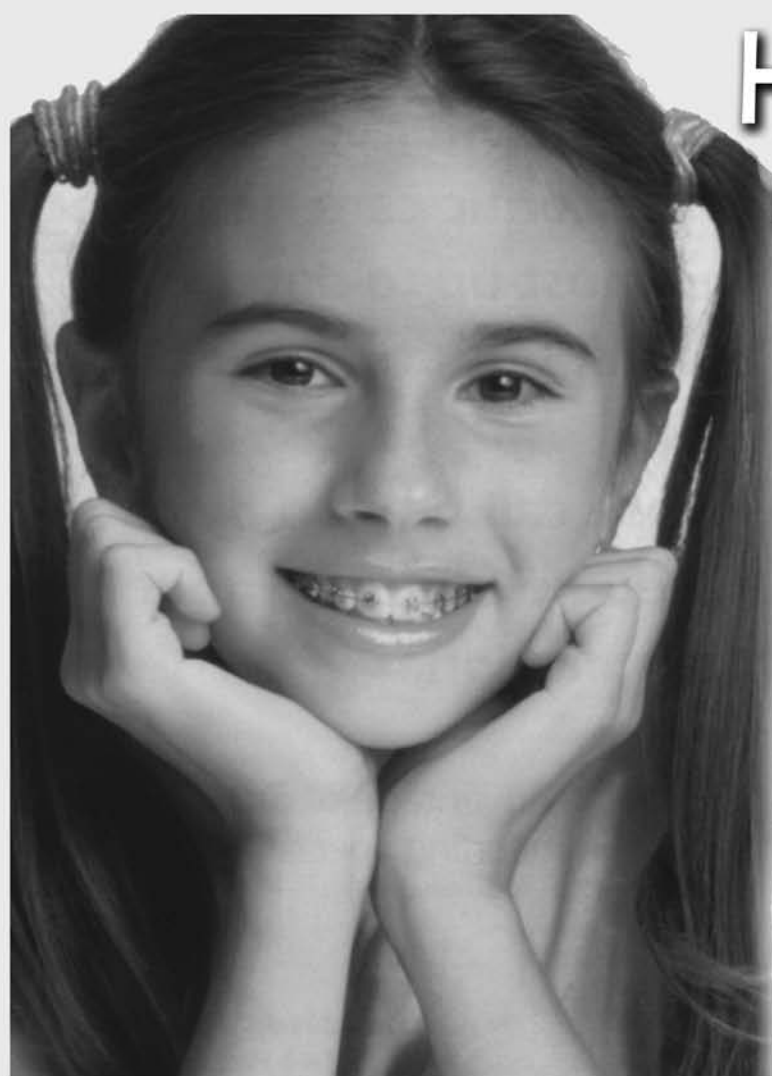
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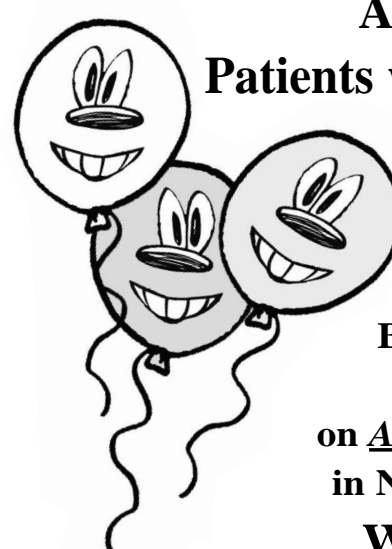


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November 2006

Sheriff Warning Senior Citizens About Phony “Lotto” Check Scam

Sheriff John Anderson is warning the residents of Madera County, and quite possibly all citizens residing in the San Joaquin Valley, about a new scam which appears to be targeting Senior Citizens.

“These predators have refined their ploy to such a clever degree,” said Sheriff Anderson, “I am very concerned that someone will get taken in.”

Sheriff Anderson found out about the scam from a Mountain resident here in Madera County, “He called me on behalf of one of our senior citizens who almost fell for this scheme.”

Here’s how the latest scam trap works: Citizens, again mostly our elderly citizens, receive a letter in the mail from an outfit called US LOTTO PROMOTIONS.

A check arrives in the mail with a cleverly written letter informing the recipient that he/she has won the Lotto. “With the number of lotteries out there it’s hard to distinguish between legitimate and fake.”

The Promotional letter informs the recipient that it has been contracted by the MUSL (Multi-State Lottery Association) to find winners who have not claimed their prize. In order to help the recipient claim their winnings a check is enclosed – sometimes in excess of \$400. The recipient is advised that the check is a “small portion” of the actual winnings. The letter goes on to instruct the recipient to cash the check – which will cover insurance, processing and shipping fees in order to claim and receive the full amount.

Once the recipient deposits the check, he/she must call the “Claims Manager” of the promotion to “activate the check,” so that the

winner can begin, “the claiming process.”

The checks, at first glance appear authentic. In fact they’re so cleverly designed they look on the surface as if they were drawn on an actual business account located in an out-of-state bank.

“Those who endorse theses bogus checks have been known to do one of two things: Either they take what was sent and begin drawing on it for personal use, or follow the promotional orders and transfer the full amount of the bogus check in order to cash in on their alleged winnings.”

Either way, adds Sheriff Anderson, the recipient finds him or herself in financial turmoil. “The letter is bogus and the check, counterfeit.” Depositing a phony check is bad enough, but anyone who dares to draw on the phony check is breaking the law.

Through the course of his own investigation Sheriff Anderson found out that the scam may have originated in Texas where the state Attorney General was forced to step in and warn the citizens throughout the state.

“Some victims have even transferred the full amount of the check to claim their prize ... they have no idea they are really drawing on their own funds.” In some cases people have bled their accounts dry ... some even transferred the amount with insufficient funds.”

“The emotional and financial toll this particular scam is taking on seniors is unconscionable.”

Sheriff Anderson is hoping that what happened in Texas doesn’t happen here and hopes this warning will reach our citizens before they fall prey.

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Worship.....8:30, 10:30 a.m. & 6 p.m.

Adult Sunday School.....10:30 a.m.

Wednesday.....7 - 8:30 p.m.

Worship Service

Royal Rangers (Boys 5-17)

Missionettes (Girls 5-17)


Rainbows (Boys & Girls 3-4)

Tuesday

Adrenaline Youth.....7 - 8:30 p.m.

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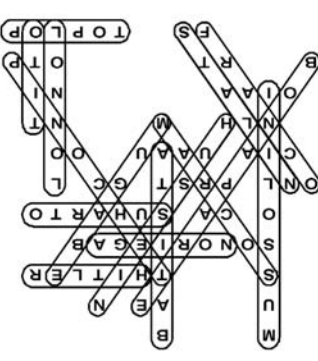
Puzzle Answers



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

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The Stock Report

Changes Ahead for School Board

By Audrey Stock

Hi neighbors,

I don't know about you but I am sure glad that the election is over. It seems to me that politicians spend an obscene amount of money on TV ads. If your supporters put up a whole lot of money to get you elected, you can be sure that they have their own agenda and feel that they own you. Public service should be actually working for the public. I am not sure that anything will really change at the Federal level but I am willing to hope.

Which brings me up to the most important election that will effect us locally, that of the Golden Valley School Board members. Mona Diaz, Roger Schuh and Steven Lewis won their place on the Golden Valley Unified School Board for the next four years. They were the top three vote-getters out of a field of five that were running. Mike Kelly and I have another two years left on our terms. Your board members have a lot of work to keep Golden Valley moving in the right direction for your students.

I called Mona Diaz after the election and she was so excited. Mona says thanks to the community for voting for her! She says it is a very good feeling to know that people trust her and have shown that they want her to represent them on the Golden Valley Unified School Board. Mona says that she asks one thing from the community and that is that all of you will "please" stay involved with the school district. Mona says that we need you and all of the community's input. Mona's vision for the next four years is to build the new middle school, have a new stadium for the community and to continue to add more programs for Golden Valley students. She says her door is always open to hear your concerns and ideas. Mona says her main focus has always been all of the students in Golden Valley Unified. I am very pleased to have her continue on the board.

After I talked to Mona, I called Mark Huddleston who has been our fearless leader on the Golden Valley School Board for the last six years. Mark was on the founding school board and has been a faithful member from the beginning. He will be sorely missed when he leaves us when his term is over on Dec. 1, 2006. Mark says it is time for him to step down. He feels that he leaves the district in the best shape financially and educationally, and the district is at the "top of its game" at the present time. Mark feels it is "OK" to hand over the reins to others to carry on the work that he started. I know the feeling because I took two years off from board work before I went back on the board. Being a member of Golden Valley Board is a four-year commitment and it is very intense. God bless you Mark and thank you for your faithful work for the students in Golden Valley School District.

The Liberty High students' 12-week grades have been sent home. These last tests will be used to create benchmarks to see if each student is on task and where they need help. Along with the benchmark system the district has installed a new

computer program called the Parents Account Management System (PAMS). Before you can use this program you have to go to sign up at the district office and get your password to be able to log on to your student's grades. There is paper work involved and you have to have your student's ID and a picture to fill out the paper work. This is a new computer program and is only available for middle school and high school students at this time. It is designed so that you can keep an eye on what your student is doing in each of their classes. If a student is behind in a class, perhaps this will help parents to encourage their student to catch up.

A new group of community people are being formed into a Citizen's Facilities Advisory Committee to lay the foundation for the district's facility needs for the next 10 to 20 years. It doesn't seem possible that Golden Valley Unified is already eight years old. It seems like just yesterday that I was walking and talking to people in our community about the advantages of creating our own school district. Some people said that we didn't have enough students in the area to create our own school district. I knew that we had students going to five different school districts to get a high school education. I kept telling people that if we could establish a new school district we could build our own high school and then the students would come. The district started with 700 kindergarten to 8th grade students just eight years ago and we are already up to 2,000 students in the district. We have the best school district in the area.

I have just watched the wonderful Veterans Day Parade in Fresno. We had Liberty High Cadets marching in this parade. Veterans Day always makes me a little sad because my brother was killed in WWII. If you know a veteran call him or her and just say "thank you." I called my son who is a veteran from the Vietnam War and my cousin who served in the Korean War. Now we are in another war in Iraq. I hope someday the world leaders will figure out how to settle problems without killing off so many young people. Fresno had the largest Veterans Parade on the West Coast and it was very well attended.

Community things that are coming up are:

Nov. 30 Castle and Cook developers will have a town hall meeting at Liberty High library at 7p.m.

The community Christmas tree lighting sponsored by Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce will be Dec. 1 at Maywood Center at 6:30 p.m. Flipside Church will be singing carols. There will be a Color Guard. Santa will arrive in a horse buggy from the North Pole. Children's pictures can be taken with Santa. The stars on the tree will be for the Veterans at the Fresno Veterans Hospital. There will be cookies, hot cider and coffee to keep you warm.

There will only be one Golden Valley Board meeting in December and at that time our new board members will be installed, so please join us on Dec. 12, 2006 at the Liberty High library at 6 p.m. Even at this busy time of the year we still need you there.

Happy Thanksgiving!

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Deputy's Vehicle Stop Launches Valley Wide Identity Theft Case

A valley-wide identity theft investigation is now underway after two Fresnoans were taken into custody early on the morning of Friday, Nov. 17 after the Madera County Sheriff's department stopped the pair on suspicion of driving a stolen vehicle.

The two arrested suspects driver Samuel Huerta, 39, and his passenger Melanie Heimgartner, 30. Heimgartner tried to pass herself off to Sheriff's deputies as someone else by providing a driver's license which showed an entirely different name and date of birth which belonged to another woman -- another woman who may be one of hundreds of victims of possible identity theft.

Had it not been for Sheriff's Deputy Valerie Breedlove's inquisitive nature, Heimgartner may have been able to keep her true identity a secret as well as avoiding prison time because as Breedlove discovered, Heimgartner is also on parole.

When Heimgartner was arrested her driver's license showed the name of a woman who actually exists who has no prior arrests according to jail records, but based on evidence seized from the vehicle,



The inquisitive Madera County Sheriff's Deputy, Valerie Breedlove.

and bags of personal information including checks, social security cards and driver's licenses all void of a picture, ripe for the taking for anyone who wanted to assume another's identity.

Based on the magnitude of evidence, which deputies were still inventorying hours later, Breedlove decided to do some digging and ran every name every possible way with various dates of birth provided.

Heimgartner was booked at 2:45 a.m. and by 7 a.m. Breedlove had found her true identity.

Breedlove's inquisitiveness led to Heimgartner remaining behind bars on a no bail hold, booked on suspicion of being in possession of stolen property and for felony parole violation. Heimgartner was on parole for a felony drug conviction.

As for the driver, Samuel Huerta, he too remains behind bars with bail set at \$5,000 and facing charges of receiving stolen property and attempting to buy and/or sell stolen property.

"Breedlove is known for her team player approach as well as her steadfast convictions, demonstrated time and again when she follows her hunch," said Sheriff John Anderson.



Suspect Melanie Heimgartner (left) was reported to have been in possession of hundreds of items used for identity theft. Heimgartner's driver, Samuel Huerta, faces charges of receiving and attempting to buy and/or sell stolen property.

Breedlove refused to believe this was Heimgartner's first arrest.

Inside the vehicle deputies found bags

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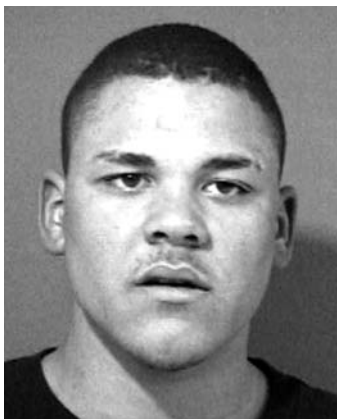


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11/06

Back Behind Bars in Just 24 Hours



Jose Cesar Salomon, 19, was arrested and put back in jail 24 hours after he had been released.

Barely 24 hours after posting his bail for second degree burglary, a Madera man is back behind bars this time facing felony drug charges.

In a span of just 24 hours, Deputy Darrell Swengel would find himself arresting Jose Cesar Salomon, 19, – not once, but twice.

Deputy Swengel arrested the 19 year old Tuesday night, Nov. 14 after witnesses ID'd him as the man who tried to break into a vehicle on Road 28 ¼. After posting his \$15,000 bond the next day, Salomon was seen again Thursday night, Nov. 16, this time being chauffeured around town in a truck that had been reported stolen out of Sonora County.

Deputy Ryan Lutz was the first to see the vehicle on Road 29, followed it to Clinton and Tozer, where Sergeant Mike Pace, and later Deputy Swengel, arrived to assist in making a felony vehicle stop.

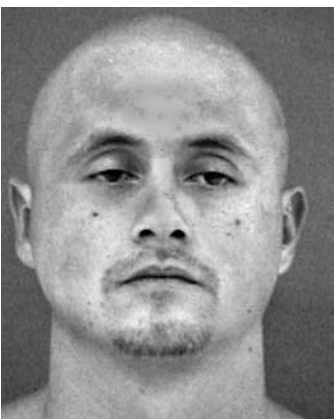
The driver, Genaro Ayala, 30, and passenger Jose Salomon were each placed in the back seat of separate patrol cars for questioning. Each one offered deputies their rendition of how they wound up riding around in the stolen truck. Ayala, who goes by a host of aliases including: Johnny Ayala, Arnold Ayala, Bueno Ayala and G-Dog, claimed he purchased the GMC

without papers for \$200. As for Jose Salomon, while deputies couldn't implicate him to this theft or purchase of the truck, they did arrest Salomon for being in possession of a controlled substance. A plastic bag with a white powdery substance determined to be methamphetamine was discovered in the back of one of the patrol cars – presumably left there by Salomon during questioning. Deputies believe this because the car had been thoroughly searched during shift change, meaning the bindle wasn't there when Lutz made the vehicle stop.

Salomon was taken into custody and booked on suspicion of being in possession of a controlled substance. He remains jailed in lieu of \$5,000.

Inside the stolen GMC driven by Ayala deputies found a glass pipe used for smoking Methamphetamine.

Ayala, was booked on suspicion of car theft, possession of a controlled substance, possession of drug paraphernalia and driving on a suspended license. He too remains behind bars with bail set at \$25,000.



Genaro Ayala, 30, played chauffeur in a truck that had been reported stolen out of Sonora County.

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COWBOY Cont. from Page 3

nearby, they put up migrant farm workers and their families in the cow barn that is now only a skeleton exposed to the sky. Others lived in their cars or pitched tents under a cluster of oak trees in the hollow.

That was quite a long time ago.

"I remember that on Saturday nights in town there were more than a thousand cotton pickers on the streets on Saturday night," he reminisced the other day. "The old town was really booming then. Now there's just the post office, a filling station and a rickety old grocery store owned by an Indian fellow who cashes checks for farm workers who buy necessities."

And I recall going to barn dances up in the mow of his old cow barn, a neighborhood pickup band of piano, drums, saxophone and banjo playing polkas and old-time waltzes and at 2 in the morning we took up a collection for the foursome to continue playing until dawn. Indeed, I met my wife while dancing with her at one of his barn dances while the band was play-

ing "The Tennessee Waltz." It was a basket social and I bought her basket and we had midnight supper together.

And in those olden days we had Sunday gatherings down at the creek, the men pitching horse shoes, dozens of kids were at play and the womenfolk exchanged recipes and local gossip.

Well, I guess neither the neighbor or I ever thought of leaving these old farmsteads until they hauled us off to Shady Oaks for Older Folks or the Grim Reaper made a call to our bailiwick. But then neither of us ever dreamed the city would so insidiously encroach this far into the countryside. I mean back in our day, there were times when we would have been indeed fortunate to sell open land out here for a relatively few thousand dollars if we could sell it at all.

But the time has come that we can no longer even afford to live on it.

And one can witness this for himself on a big billboard that went up on a pasture alongside the highway sometime ago:

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New STAR Motorcycle Chapter Charter Signing at Yamaha 99

The STAR Touring and Riding Association is an International Association of motorcycle riders with 235 Chapters currently operating throughout America whose members participate in a variety of local fund raising events and charitable causes. The mission of the association is to promote safe riding and camaraderie among riders and provide goodwill to the community. On Sat., Nov. 18 Yamaha 99, an authorized Yamaha dealer, sponsored a new STAR Touring & Riding Chapter that will be known as the Madera 399.

"Our local group of riders has already donated funds to the Madera Peace Officers Memorial Fund with their recent Grizzly Run," said Jim Riley, owner of Yamaha 99. "The new Chapter 399 is open to all riders no matter what brand they ride. There are organized rides to national parks, the coast, desert, and local points of interest."

Riders from all over California showed up to celebrate the new Madera Chapter 399 and then enjoyed BBQ, a live band and bike games.

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Liberty Babe Ruth goes to State



Back Row - Coach Roger Schuh, Nate Swan, Mitch Kochergen, Daniel Whittemore, Kenneth Kirkman, Zach Schuh, Chase Cullins, Wes Kirste, Coach John Palacios, Tyler Melvin and Coach Pat Bariteau. Front Row - Darren Anderson, Nick Palacios, Nate Alchelpohl, Josh Kelley, Pat Bariteau, David Schmall and Jake Preo.

By Tyler Melvin

This year our Babe Ruth All Star Team had incredible hype and expectations to live up to. The past two years we had gone to state and went two and out losing by one run in the first games. However, this year's team was thought to be one of, if not, the *best* team ever out of the Madera Ranchos.

The roster consisted of Tyler Melvin, Daniel Whittemore, Kenneth Kirkman, Zach Schuh, Mitch Kochergen, Jake Preo, Pat Bariteau, David Schmall, Darren Anderson, Nick Palacios, Nate Swan, Josh Kelley, Nate Alchelpohl, Chase Cullins and Wes Kirste.

This roster is pretty stacked. Plain and simple, one of the best. We played Edison our first game at districts and dominated as expected. We then played Carey (Hoover) and beat them twice to become District Champions. We averaged 16 runs per game in districts. Then we took the long drive to Exeter for Small State. The first game we were paired with Corcoran. We then, of course, ten run-ruled them. After that game, we were unbeatable, beating Shafter the same way. For the championship we had to play Corcoran ... again. We defeated them 6-3 in the closest game of the season.

The California Central Section State

Tournament was being hosted in Lodi. The two-hour plus drive forced us to stay in hotels. We stayed in the Comfort Inn in the worst part of Lodi. Four guys to a room with bad air-conditioning made it even better. This year we were paired with Arroyo Grande in the first round. We ended up defeating them 12-1 for our first ever win at state. That Sunday, we played Manteca. We lost 13-6 in our first lost of the All-star season. Because we lost, we were forced to play every day until we either won the tourney, or lost.

The next game we were pumped beyond belief because we had found out whom we were going to be playing — Madera. We had complete momentum after putting up eight runs in the first inning. The final score was 12-1 and Madera was going home. The night before the Madera game, Northwest Bakersfield, our hotel partners, had gotten in trouble by patrolling police officers because they were out at two o'clock. When asked who they were, they said that they were “with Liberty.”

The next day was it, baby, the “Battle of the Comfort Inn.” The one we had been waiting for. Northwest Bakersfield was our newest enemy. We put up 10 runs in the first inning and the score was 10-2. Sadly, after that we committed six errors that game and lost 23-12. We had lost our final game at State.

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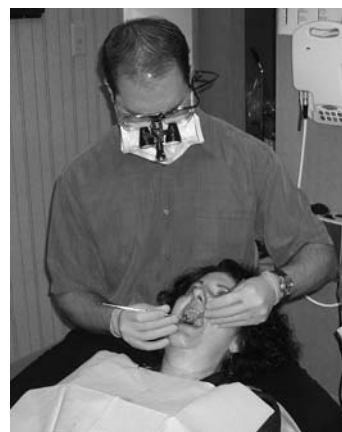
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Business Profiles

10 Years of Smiles at Dr. Pia's



How most people have seen Dr.
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No place in the Ranchos keeps the people smiling like Ranchos Dental Care. Now in its tenth year, the practice of Dr. Matthew Pia has flourished in the community that he, his wife and three children call home. But why start a practice in the Ranchos? "I was born in Madera and liked the area," the doctor says. "I was looking for a smaller community where I could grow with the community." And grow he has. Dr. Pia estimates his patient base at "a couple of thousand," including some patients that come from as far away as Visalia and Merced.

In addition to general dentistry, Dr. Pia has also been offering orthodontic services for the last five years. He had an exceptionally memorable opportunity to use his orthodontic skills recently when LHS football player Tyler Melvin came to him with a broken tooth one day that he had a big event to go to. A short while later Tyler was as good as new and none of the kids at school were even aware of the emergency procedure.

In addition to Matthew Pia, the dentist, there's Matthew Pia the Ranchos community member. His children attend Golden Valley schools and he coaches softball, baseball, soccer and flag football here. He's involved with the Flipside church and Boy Scouting and his medical practice provides work for five employees. In addition, he's established an academic scholarship at Liberty High School for worthy candidates who want to pursue the medical profession in college. "I started it with the first graduating class and have been doing it ever since," Pia said.

The good news is Dr. Pia has absolutely no plans to leave the area. He's not quite ready to expand his business, yet, but if he should the Ranchos will figure heavily into his plans.

"I love this area!" Pia exclaimed, "I am proud to be a participating member of this wonderful community. The schools out here are great and my family loves living here."

Dr. Pia, we love having you out here. Here's to the next 10 years.



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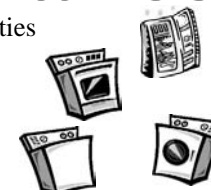
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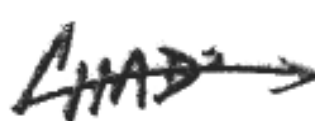


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Are You Thankful ... All the Time?

By Ken Cooksey, Jr.

We are entering into what I like to call the “month” of Thanksgiving. As we do, so many things immediately come to mind that I am thankful for. You know things like my health, my finances and my family. If I were to ask you what you were thankful for, you would probably have many of the same things that you are thankful for as I am.

It is an easy thing however to give thanks when things are going the way we think they should be going, but what about when things aren’t going as we think they ought to go, are we still able to give thanks?

When things happen in our lives that are so contrary to what we call good, are we still able to give thanks, or are we so down on God and anyone who might even speak positive to us that we become angry at the very mention of their name or the sight of them? Here before us lies the big test then doesn’t it? The test being, is our character one that is able to give thanks to God or anyone else for that matter even when we don’t like what life is throwing our way, or are we only able to give thanks when life is going the way we like it to go?

I’m certainly not suggesting that it is an easy thing to be thankful when tragedy comes our way, or when difficult times come along, but I am saying that it is possible to be thankful even in the hard times.

You see, when we realize that thankfulness isn’t dependent upon our circumstances surrounding us, but rather on a joy that comes from the inside of a person, then we can truly be thankful at any time, and in any situation. You can be thankful even when you don’t have food on the table, or when your health is not where you want it to be. You can be thankful even through the worst of times in this life.

I do want to tell you though; peace and happiness such as this can only come

when you have the peace of mind that transcends all understanding. I know you want to know how you can acquire such peace, so let me tell you.

Imagine with me for just a moment if you will, never being anxious about anything! It seems like an impossibility, doesn’t it? We all have worries on the job, in our homes, at school; but what I am suggesting is to turn your worries into prayers. Do you want to worry less? Then may I suggest that you pray more! Whenever you start to worry, stop and begin to pray. Allow God to take the burden that you are feeling and put it on His shoulders. It will all be much lighter when God is carrying the load instead of you.

God’s peace is much different from the world’s peace. True peace is not found in positive thinking, or in absence of conflict, or in good feelings. Real peace comes from knowing that God is in control. Control of all things! Your trust in God will bring such a surety that your destiny is set, and no matter what may come your way, you can know that everything is going to be ok.


As Pastor of Liberty Worship Center right here in the Ranchos, I teach that there are only two times when you need to praise or thank God: 1) When you feel like it; and 2) when you don’t! Any other time, you don’t need to!

As a Pastor in our community, I want you to know that I am continuously praying for you and your entire family, as is our entire church family at L.W.C. Have a wonderful and thankful holiday as we celebrate Thanksgiving together. Always remember that God loves you, and He wants you to be thankful beyond your limits through Him.

God bless you all.

Ken Cooksey, Jr. is the pastor of the Ranchos’ Liberty Worship Center, located at 37275 Ave. 12.

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Safe & Sound

Safety Should Be a Daily Exercise

By Dave Johnson

Recently much of my time has been spent conducting the “Safe Realtors” Personal Protection Course throughout California (www.saferealtors.com). In doing so, I have noticed many topics that would apply to everyone, no matter their occupation. Whether you’re a real estate professional, a doctor, a teacher, or a full-time parent, there are many things you can do day to day to increase your level of safety and decrease your chances of becoming a victim. First, we must remember that Prevention and Preparedness should be our focus and Defensive Awareness should be our state of mind. Prevention comes from education, action and consistency. Preparedness reduces paranoia and increases self-confidence. Effective preparedness comes from realistic training. Defensive Awareness means to be calmly and constantly aware of your surroundings (ALL of your surroundings) and mentally prepared to react appropriately to whatever, without feeling nervous, apprehensive, afraid, or paranoid. In fact done correctly, you should feel very comfortable, confident and secure. This mental and physical sense will in turn be very evident to the criminal element.

So what simple things can we do to increase our level of safety on a day to day basis?

1. Try your best to plan out your day and then let someone you know and trust know about these plans.
2. Touch bases with this person throughout the day at specific agreed-to times. Keep in mind that unless you perform #2, #1 is useless.
3. Develop a “code word” or “code phrase” to use should you find yourself in a dangerous situation and able to make a phone call. By utilizing just these three steps you have created a sort of safety net should something go wrong. If your special someone is not contacted at the agreed-to time or if they are contacted with the code word or phrase, emergency actions and pre-planned responses can be implemented immediately.
- Now let’s talk about ways to avoid a bad situation all together.
4. Get out of the “Automatic Mode.” It is easy for a majority of us to fall into this category. We get up at the same time, we do the same things and we drive the same route, etc.
5. Change it up. Remember that often the criminal element studies their target very carefully and for some time. Take a different route, a different street, stop at a different coffee shop, etc. By changing your daily routine, you not only become

unpredictable, you become a harder target and may even view the world in a different, more refreshing and interesting way.

6. Look outside before you exit your house, auto or place of work.

7. Make sure your house, office and car doors are LOCKED.

8. Be sure you have a cell phone in hand before leaving to a different location and that it’s fully charged and in proper working order.

9. Contact someone and update them on your plans before leaving to a different location.

10. Make sure your car and home alarm systems are in good working order.

11. Walk with confidence, look around, and make eye contact.

12. Be prepared to defend yourself.

13. Enroll in a REALISTIC Self-Defense training program. HINT! HINT!

DON’T WAIT UNTIL SOMETHING HAPPENS! Remember, “The WORST time to start Self-Defense training is AFTER an attack. The only way to really know how you will react when faced with a violent encounter, is to experience that encounter in a safe environment.

CONTACT ME. I would love to hear from you. E-mail me at info@masterjohnson.com. Your participation is vital and appreciated. Remember, since we are all in this together, let’s make it a community project, have some fun, and increase our level of safety.

PARENTAL GUIDANCE: Spend some time with your children reviewing the following sites. www.amw.com/kids, tcs.cybertipline.com and www.missingkids.com/adccouncil.

SELF-DEFENSE TIPS: SEEK PROFESSIONAL INSTRUCTION. Protect your space. Always stand at a slanted angle with one foot back spaced at about shoulder width. Hands should be relaxed and held between waist and chest level. Don’t wait to be hit in order to defend yourself. **KNOW YOUR ENVIRONMENT. BE PREPARED TO ACT INSTANTLY.**

Master Johnson is a world-recognized security and self-defense expert specializing in executive protection, hand-to-hand, multiple opponents and weapon disarms. He is listed in the “Who is Who” in Martial Arts and was named “Master Instructor of the Year” 1996 by the World Martial Arts Hall of Fame. He is the owner of Golden Valley Martial Arts, Tactical Training International, Dave Johnson Real Estate, and operates the World’s only online self-defense and Black Belt training course at www.masterjohnson.com. He can be contacted at 559-917-5262.

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Ex-Academic Decathletes Sought For 25th Anniversary Program

On Feb. 3, 2007 the Madera County Academic Decathlon will celebrate its 25th Anniversary.

The Madera County Office of Education needs former Decathletes to participate in a "25 Years of Excellence" video.

To celebrate this monumental event, Madera County will hold a commemorative celebration before the awards ceremony at 4 p.m. at Madera South High School.

During the ceremony Madera County Office of Education would like to honor former decathletes with certificates and present a video highlighting past years.

Former decathletes are needed for interviews for the video. Any photos or video footage is also welcome from decathletes.

More than 525 participants have benefited since the event's inception in 1982.

The event has seen 30 different coaches from the six schools that have participated.

Each year the United States Academic Decathlon produces study materials and tests in eight of the 10 event categories. Each year the Decathlon has a specific theme and each section encompasses that into their test. The tests include: art, economics, essay, language and literature, math, music, social science and science. A speech and interview are also conducted for each student.

Volunteers are needed to judge the speeches and interviews the morning of Saturday, Feb. 3.

Former Decathletes and anyone interested in the volunteering at the event, please call Kristi Peine, events developer at 559-662-6273.

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Garden Tips**Don't Turn Off Sprinklers ... Yet**

By Thea Fiskin

Autumn is here but what little rain we've gotten hasn't been enough to turn off the sprinklers yet, so continue watering till we get a really good soaking. Our first frost usually arrives the middle of November so now is the time to prepare. Bring frost-tender plants inside or under the patio for protection. Some plants that are in the ground will require protection too. Wrap trunks of young palms and citrus with blankets, burlap or heavy paper. If you use plastic, create a tent over the plant without touching it and open it on sunny days so the plant doesn't cook. Some people string Christmas lights or place buckets of warm water under their plants on especially cold nights as added protection.

Garden Chores

Fallen Leaves - Don't waste fallen leaves by throwing them away. Instead, rake into piles, then run over them with the lawn mower to chop, reduce volume, and gather them in the mower's bag. Afterward add to the compost pile, bury in the veggie garden, spread in flower beds, or store in dark garbage bags. Leaves break down in no time to make a wonderful amendment that enriches garden soil.

Landscaping Trees - Prune deciduous and evergreen trees with dense canopies, like the California Pepper, before any more winter storms arrive. Selectively remove entire branches to allow airflow through the tree canopy and prevent wind from blowing over top heavy trees. PLEASE DON'T stub branches back so trees end up looking like hat racks! Large trees should be pruned by a certified arborist.

Houseplants - As we turn on the heaters our houseplants will be gasping for the humidity they need, so treat them to a humidity tray. Line the tray under the plant with pebbles and add water to just below the surface of the rocks. Never let plants sit directly in water or they will rot. Some plants also benefit from misting including dracaena, ferns and schefflera. Do not mist cacti, succulents or any hairy leaved plants like African violets.

Weed Prevention - Winter weeds are popping up now; remove them while young before new seeds form. Spraying isn't always necessary; a hula hoe works great and helps work off all those holiday goodies. If weeds are a big problem in large flowerbeds or lawns, then apply a preemergence herbicide to prevent annual weed germination. Discourage weeds by mulching flowerbeds, shrubs and trees with a thick layer of leaves or other organic topsoil. If using preemergence herbicides, spray first then add a layer of mulch.

Critter Control - Now that nights are cooler slugs and snails are lurking about. Hand-pick or use snail bait to control. If you've got pets or kids use iron phosphate baits instead of the poisonous metaldehyde baits. Iron phosphate breaks down into fertilizer and can be used on any ornamental or vegetable plant right up to picking.

Dormant Sprays - If peach or nectarine trees had curled or puckered leaves this summer, then take preventative measures now against the fungal disease called "peach leaf curl" for next spring. Rake leaves when they fall, remove any fruit mummies, and discard both rather than put them in the compost pile. Spray trunk, branches and ground underneath tree with a copper-based fungicide or a Bordeaux mixture (slurry made of hydrated lime and copper sulfate) or a synthetic fungicide.

What To Plant

Winter Interest - Add winter interest to your garden with plants that produce berries. One plant may be all that is needed to spark interest in a dreary corner. Try cotoneaster, holly, pyracantha, or toyon.

Winter Color - Plant calendulas, delphinium, dianthus, foxgloves, Iceland poppies, Johnny-jump-up, ornamental kale, paludosum daisy, pansies, primroses, snapdragons and stock. Or spread wildflower seeds, like bachelor buttons, California poppies, clarkia, gypsophila, and larkspur.

Bulbs - Now that the temperature has dropped its time to plant bulbs, try anemones, daffodils, hyacinths, scilla and tulips. Garden stores have good supplies and many bulb companies on the internet have great specials on their leftovers.

Vegetables - Winter transplants available in nurseries are artichokes, bok-choi, broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, lettuce and Swiss chard. Sow seed of beets, carrots, lettuce, peas and radishes.

Now is a good time to get individual attention on garden questions from your local nursery, since this is their slow season. Or better yet give the Master Gardeners a call or email us at our Website.

Happy Thanksgiving.

Thea Fiskin is a UC Master Gardener with Tulare/Kings County. Master Gardeners are members of communities who are trained by UC Cooperative Extension experts in different aspects of plant science and then volunteer to extend that information to their community. The mission of the Master Gardener program is to provide research-based information for gardening practices and technologies of home horticulture, integrated pest management and environmental resource conservation.

The Garden Bug

Work those plants

Put small trees and shrubs to work: use them as wind-breaks, define property boundaries, provide privacy or block unsightly views. Dense plantings can minimize street noise and encourage nesting; berry bushes can provide birds with food.

Cobb’s Ranch Subject of Seniors’ Madera Ranchos History Lesson

By Eleanore Burchell

Our Ranchos/Hills Senior Center, located at 37330 Berkshire, would like to continue telling you about the “Historic” Cobb’s Ranch. This documented history of the property began years before California became a state on Sept. 9, 1850. Hopefully, you read the first half of this article in the October 2006 Senior Report published in the Ranchos Independent. This month will continue where it ended with, “... on April 4, 1846, the San Joaquin River served as the centerline of a land grant called ‘Ranchos Rio Del San Joaquin.’ Containing 48,801 acres, this grant stretched along the river from the present day site of Herndon near Highway 99 to the town Millerton, now covered by Millerton Lake, and included the river land upon which the Cobb’s would settle.”

Van Buren and Minerva Cobb with Mary, age 5, Elizabeth, 3, and James, 1, traveled by wagon train, drawn by mules, from Indiana to California in October 1868 after Van Buren Cobb decided to leave his law practice. According to family legend, Van Buren Cobb very well may have known another Midwest attorney - Abraham Lincoln. People were fighting one another for houses in post-Civil War Indiana - “you stole my house and I stole your house” - the Cobb’s left Indiana to escape the hullabaloo and aftermath of the Civil War.

After Van Buren and Minerva Cobb arrived in our area, chance just fell their way as the original land grant applicants failed to fulfill obligations agreed upon and their final title was not approved. There were several 160 acre parcels and applicants involved. The rejections for final title approval were different and not clearly documented. In one case, the property was not properly improved and this was a must. The original grantee agreed to build a dwelling or fence the property if it was to be used for grazing cattle and these agreements were not kept. In another case the grantee began selling off portions of his grant. When the buyers were unable to gain titles to their investments, the California Land Commission, a division of the United States Department of Interior, became involved and eventually wrangled its way to the United States Supreme Court.

It is believed part of the above mentioned property was acquired in Van Buren Cobb’s name and another part in Minerva Cobb’s name. Tax records support land sales made by Minerva while taxes were assessed to Van Buren for raising sheep. In either case, it was well known the Cobb’s were financially secure when they arrived here from Indiana and that Van Buren Cobb’s family from Tennessee was affluent.

Our Senior Center members will be serving coffee and cookies at Cobb’s Ranch on Dec. 2 and 3; 9 and 10; and 16 and 17. This is an enchanting place for children to see Santa in his house on stilts, the pizza garden, chickens and cows, etc. Hope to see you there!

The next monthly sale will be held on Saturday, Dec. 2 from 8 a.m. – noon. This is the tree-planting time of year so come pick out a new one for your yard. New shrubs and flowering plants have just been received and will spark up the front of your home for the winter. The Treasure House will be open and filled with new sale items. There will be no boutique, produce or bake sale at the center on Dec. 2 due to our involvement at Cobb’s Ranch. However, several members have been making pomegranate jelly and, at present, we have beautiful, large pomegranates and tomatoes available in the produce area of the main building on Mondays through Fridays, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. We don’t want you to get out of the habit of coming in to

see us so remember the plants, cookbooks and the boutique sections are also available Monday through Friday 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., Tuesdays, 6 to 9 p.m., and Thursday evenings between 6 and 9 p.m.

Remember Tuesday evenings at 5:30 to 9 p.m. because it is BINGO night.

On Thursday, Nov. 16, 53 Ranchos/Hills Senior members gathered to celebrate a Thanksgiving dinner together. After the meal, games were played. A good time was had by all.

Nurses from the Madera PHCA Senior Program will be providing FREE comprehensive health screenings that includes health history, measurement of blood pressure, height and weight, pulse, screenings for diabetes, hearing, vision, urinalysis and more. This service is for persons 50 years and older and is scheduled for Wednesday, Dec. 20 between 9:30 and 11:30 a.m. Health assessments are by appointment only so be sure to call Melody or Karla at 675-7893.

The November Birthday and Anniversary celebration luncheon with 28 in attendance was held Nov. 10 at East-West Restaurant in Fresno. The December celebration is scheduled for Friday, Dec. 1 at 5 p.m. at Cats in Madera Ranchos.

The Retired Seniors Volunteer Program (RSVP) staff is sponsoring a 4-day Mexican Baja cruise, Feb. 26 through March 2, 2007. They leave Long Beach with a stop at Catalina, on to Ensenada then head back with a fun day at sea before docking in Long Beach. Want to join them? Call Joann Blancett today at 645-4864 as reservations need to be made very soon.

Laughter is a lot of fun and also good for your body and soul. If you need someone to laugh with, then we need you! Come join our Thursday evening potlucks with games played afterwards. There is a lot of fun here.

More Facts and Fun

A nutritionally balanced lunch program Monday through Friday 11:30 a.m. Suggested price for 60 years and older is \$1.75. Reservations are needed a day in advance so remember to call Joann at 645-4864. There is still room in the well-attended exercise class on Monday, Wednesday and Fridays, from 10:15 to 11:30 a.m. You need not be a member to attend these classes. The attendance has been growing but there is always room for one more: you! Even two more if you bring your friend! The line dancing class plans to start up again on Thursday, Jan. 11 at 1 p.m.

Remember, BINGO is normally held every Tuesday evenings 5:30 to 9 p.m. However, due to Christmas and the New Year holidays, we will not be open Dec. 19, 26 and Jan. 2, 9 and 16. Hope to see you again on Jan. 23.

Up and Coming Events

December 1, 5 p.m. Monthly Birthday and Anniversary Celebration at Cats in Madera Ranchos.

December 2, 8 a.m. to noon, Monthly Sale.

December 20, Health Screening, call Melody or Karla at 675-7893 for an appointment.

Weekly Events

Monday through Friday Lunch Program, 11:30 a.m. (Reservations needed, call Joann 645-4864).

Monday, Exercise Class, 10:15 to 11:30 a.m.

Tuesday, Pinochle, noon until?

Tuesday, BINGO, 5:30 to 9 p.m. (Hot dogs, hamburgers, desserts and more available).

Wednesday, Exercise Class, 10:15 to 11:30 a.m.

Wednesday, Card BINGO, noon to 1 p.m.

Thursday, Potluck then Hand & Foot

or Pinochle, 6 to 9 p.m. (Please bring your own plate and silverware).


Friday, Exercise Class, 10:15 to 11:30 a.m.

We have shared data regarding our Senior Center with you. We wish you peace, beauty, hope, joy and love and welcome you to come and be one of us as our organization offers and promotes social, educational and civic activities in order to provide a better quality of life for all senior citizens. You have received an invitation. Hope to see you soon?

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Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps

SON, YOUR MOTHER FEELS I SHOULD HAVE A TALK WITH YOU ABOUT...

WHERE BABIES COME FROM.

CONCEPTION TAKES PLACE WHEN A MAN AND WOMAN...FALL IN LOVE...AND THEN...

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The Spats

by Jeff Pickering

I HEARD YOU TOLD THE NEIGHBORS THAT YOU MARRIED ME FOR MY LOOKS.

HMM...I GUESS I DID

WELL GEEZ...I HAD TO MAKE UP "SOMETHING!!"

HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF

FIND AT LEAST 6 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PANELS.

Differences: 1. Shirt is different. 2. Sleeve is shorter. 3. Freckles are missing. 4. Mat is thicker. 5. Nose is smaller. 6. You will be left with three squares. 7. 1, 3, 4, 7 and 16. If you remove straws 1, 3, 4, 7 and 16, you will be left with three squares.

PUZZLE CARD

YOUR PROBLEM is to remove five straws from the 17 shown here and have three squares left.

16. You will be left with three squares. If you remove straws 1, 3, 4, 7 and 16, you will be left with three squares.

THE BIRTHDAY BOY! When asked the day of his birth, Harry replied: "Two days ago I was 14 years old. Next year I shall be 17." From his answer can you figure out on what day of the year Harry's birthday occurs?

Dec. 31. Harry is speaking on Jan. 1.

Junior Whirl

by Charles Barry Townsend

FIND THE BIG WORDS!

Using the definitions and anagrams below, you must find the seven eight-letter words that fit into the framework pictured on the left. The letters in the two anagram words for each definition must be unscrambled and used to form the word asked for.

Definitions & Anagrams:

- Reddish beetles glad + busy
- Puritanical person soul + been
- Thick sugar syrup mass + lose
- Sudden collapse snit + pail
- Opened an envelope duel + sane
- Bring parts together slab + seem
- Beach find less + heal

Super Crossword

BEFORE AND AFTER

ACROSS

1 Warts and all

5 Model Beverly

10 Desert growth

15 27th president

19 Comic Carvey

20 Fills the hold

21 TV's "Full —"

22 Sutherland solo

23 HEAD STARTS

27 Dogpatch's Daisy —

28 Patriot Nathan

29 Sherwood sight

30 Moscow moola

31 Workbench attachment

32 Croce's Mr. Brown

34 Expert

36 Writer Rand

37 Medical measure

40 Chalice accessory

41 Hammer feature

42 "— go brag!"

43 Pres. Bush, e.g.

44 Ubiquitous infinitive

45 Loser's locale

48 PRE SETS

55 Make wine divine

56 Diminish

57 Tic

58 Bob of 21

59 — polloi

60 Join the leisure class?

62 Let up

63 "SNL" bit

67 "Gross!"

69 "Marathon —" ('76 film)

70 Unduly

72 "Como — usted?"

73 Most docile

75 Joins forces

78 Lear, to Cordelia

80 Missouri mountain range

81 Jergens or Astaire

82 Intimate

84 — kwon do

87 HAPPY ENDINGS

91 Long or Peeples

92 Caffeine effect

93 "Trinity" author

94 A speck with wings

95 Connecticut campus

96 Cardiff's country

98 French philosopher

100 Light touch

103 Silence a squeaker

104 He had a golden touch

105 Insect stage

106 Soothe

108 Welles role

109 Clothing

110 Sound like a hound

113 GRAND FINALES

119 Geraint's lady

120 Crazy as —

121 Actress Witherspoon

122 At any time

123 Contradict

124 Neon —

125 Mideast nation

126 "Saving Private —" ('98 film)

DOWN

1 Eliot's "— Bede"

2 Writer Paretzsky

3 Memo start

4 — Tome

5 Delight

6 Scout rank

7 Add fringe

8 Aspin or Paul

9 Sixth sense

10 Rose of —

11 Actor Wendell

12 Discourteous

13 Take advantage of

14 "Golden Girl" Arthur

15 Forbidden

16 Antilles isle

17 Stable youngster

18 Spoken for

24 British pol

25 Raison d'—

26 Sleuth Nancy

31 Delivery trucks

32 Cavalry soldier

33 Decorate glass

34 Philatelist's purchase

35 Columnist Herb

37 — vu

38 North-western st.

39 Location

40 Brad of "The Mexican"

41 Pamper

43 Cook Claiborne

44 Obsolete title

45 Musty

46 Summons electronically

47 Actor's actor?

49 — -jongg

50 Approximately

51 They're what's left

52 Book part

53 Vane dir.

54 Sundance's sweetie

61 Post or Dickinson

62 Sunday supper

63 Stash

64 "On the Waterfront" director

65 Japanese porcelain

66 — firma

68 Act like Vikings?

71 Effluvia

74 Enjoy the Alps

76 Uncluttered

77 A great need

79 Strauss' "— Rosen—kavalier"

81 On — (doing great)

83 Baseball's Aparicio

84 Add color

85 Fruit-tree spray

86 Punta del —

88 California resort

89 A shake in the grass?

90 Taj town

95 Mr. Ma

96 Actress Ryder

97 125 Across' city

98 Unexpected

99 Lhasa —

100 Sealed

101 Skirt shape

102 Unadorned

104 Hardy's "The — of Caster-bridge"

105 Vital sign

107 He's Devine

108 It may be square

109 See 118

110 Bunch of birds

111 Bailiwick

112 Knitter's need

114 Purrfect pet?

115 Barley beverage

116 Summon mommy

117 Bray beginning

118 With 109 Down, a way to pay

TRIVIA TEST

By Fifi Rodriguez

1. PERSONALITIES: What was the boxing champion Muhammad Ali's original name?

2. FOOD & DRINK: What is the liquor cassis made from?

3. POP CULTURE: In what year was the Pillsbury Doughboy introduced in TV ads?

4. ASTRONOMY: What is a "maria"?

5. ART: Who painted the famous portrait called "American Gothic"?

6. LITERATURE: Who wrote the novel "The Heart is a Lonely Hunter"?

7. MOVIES: Who was the first black man to win an Oscar?

8. ROYALTY: What is Prince Andrew's official title?

9. INVENTIONS: Who is credited with inventing Teflon?

10. U.S. PRESIDENTS: What was the name of President Clinton's cat?

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K C I A I U A A U F D O O B Z

X W N L H U C M S Q O N N T L

J O I A A H F D C A Y W N I V

B T S Q R T P N L K I H O T P

F E C B Z F S Y W T O P L O P

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

Batista	Hussein	Mussolini	Stalin
Bonaparte	Lon Nol	Noriega	Suharto
Franco	Marcos	Pinochet	Tito
Hitler	Mugabe	Pol Pot	

Answers

10. Socks

9. Roy Plunkett

8. Duke of York

role in "Lilies of the Field."

7. Sidney Potter won for his

6. Carson McCullers

5. Grant Wood

is a dark region on the Moon.

4. Also known as a sea, a maria

3. 1965

2. Black currants

1. Cassius Clay

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*Upon close of escrow



Great open floor plan. 3 BR/1.75 BA, formal dining area w/large kitchen, breakfast bar and pantry. Master BR has large walk-in closet, new Pergo in great room, hall and bedrooms. Large patio and covered RV parking. Laundry room and fenced yard. All on 1 acre in Madera Ranchos. \$365,000.

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37144 Ave. 12 Ste. 102
Madera Ranchos



11/06



John Herrera, Realtor

I've been your neighbor since 1979. I have coached youth sports, am a member of Ranchos Kiwanis and am a retired Fresno Police officer. Now, I am a realtor for London Properties and a member of the Fresno and Madera Multiple Listing Services.

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Continental Realty P R E S E N T S



4 Bed
3 Ba.
\$429,000

36027 Ruth Ave.

Brand new custom home on 1.25 acres near Liberty High. Home features open great room with vaulted ceilings, isolated bed and bath perfect for guests, spacious kitchen with breakfast bar and two closets in master suite. Jack & Jill bathroom between bedrooms 2 & 3, nice utility room with pantry. Finished 2-car garage.



3 Bed
2 Ba.
\$530,000

16751 Monreal

Country home w/pool, huge shop and horse set-up on 2.25 acres. Great room, formal dining room, woodstove, dual pane glass, 2 patio doors and solar panels (pays approx. 80% of electric bill). Yard complete with mature landscaping and fencing front and back. Shop insulated; Pebble Tec on pool; Fruit trees.



3 Bed
2 Ba.
\$469,000

12336 Waverly

Beautiful park-like yard showcases this home. Kitchen just updated w/tile counters and floors, maple cabinets, eating island and storage! Master suite has French doors that lead out to a spa. Tile flooring everywhere and unique ceiling treatments. Large outdoor shed w/electricity, mature landscaping and raised garden area.



4 Bed
3 Ba.
\$499,000

16211 Road 36

Sharp custom home with vaulted ceilings and bay window. Large kitchen and breakfast bar with pantry. French doors, huge master bedroom with large walk-in closet. Oversized shower with seat, raised vanity and sitting area. Upgraded carpet and lighting throughout. 4-car finished garage and large covered back patio.

Call the listing office for all of the amenities of any of these properties

11/06

call Paul Sobaje at Continental Realty

431-7060 or 645-5450



11/06

Tom Kellner Owner/Broker
559-706-3162 cell
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Land

We have buyers for orchards. If you would like to sell, please call us. Land advertised here, and ones we are negotiating on, are great investment opportunities. For instance, the 398 acres on Ave. 15 are listed with a new price at \$19,500 per acre, while other properties in the area are selling for \$25K to \$45K per acre - and more. Give us a call and let us talk with you about investment opportunities.

398+ acres. Ave. 15 west of Rd. 35. \$19,500/acre. Long range development. Williamson Act now. Full parcel Only. Owner/Agent Related.

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Homes



GREAT PROPERTY/GREAT PRICE - 3 BD/2BA @ 36954 Sparta. RV parking, newer comp roof, freshly painted in/out, lots of closet/storage, security alarm, sprinklers front/back. Many extras. \$299,000.



3BD/1.5BA @ 17808 WABASH Somewhat distressed but will be upgraded w/ new paint, etc. Large, fenced backyard w/covered patio. Roof and ext. paint are 2 yrs. new. Drywell is 3 yrs. new. On water system. \$280,000.

3 BD/1BA @ 29462 AVE 13 1/2. Cute 3 bedroom 1 bath home on a quiet, dead-end street. Lots of trees in front. Great for first time buyers. \$250,000.

1.3 ACRES 3 BD/2BA @ 18692 Rhine Dr. New wiring, plumbing, new tile counters. Huge covered patio. Property backs on an orchard. 60x30 insulated/heated shop w/office. \$395,000.

AVE. 11 at RD 35 - 36 ac. of grazing land near Valley Teen Ranch. Corner parcel, Williamson Act, ag use only for now. Owner/Agent \$900,000.

1+ ac. corner lot on Ave. 12. \$475K. Commercial potential.

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For Sale - Electric washer & dryer \$125 for both. Twin day bed with mattress \$35. Trampoline with safety net \$100. Horses for sale \$1,500 and up. **Call 645-0203.**

For Sale - 2006 Pool table. Never used w/accessories, 1” slate, leather pockets, warranty, Cost \$4k. Sacrifice \$1,195. **Call 230-0486.**

For Sale - 2006 Hot tub. Loaded digital, 47 chrome jets, ozone, waterfall and therapy seats, Brand new! Cost \$8,200. Sacrifice \$3,875. **Call 559-360-9047.**

For Sale - Spa. Never used. Loaded, therapy seats, warranty. \$2475. **Call 438-0248.**

For Sale - 7 pc. bedroom set. Solid cherry wood sleigh bed, nightstand, dresser/mirror, chest. All Dovetail, Thomasville Quality, New in box. Cost \$8k. Sacrifice \$1,875. **Call 277-2511.**

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Tractor Work - discing, rototilling, weed cutting. Bobcat work: drilling, post holes, trees, trenching and clean ups. **Call Neal at 645-1200 or 285-8211.**

Tractor Work - House pads, lot leveling, driveways, trenching and concrete work. **Call 559-970-4476 or 559-645-1500.**

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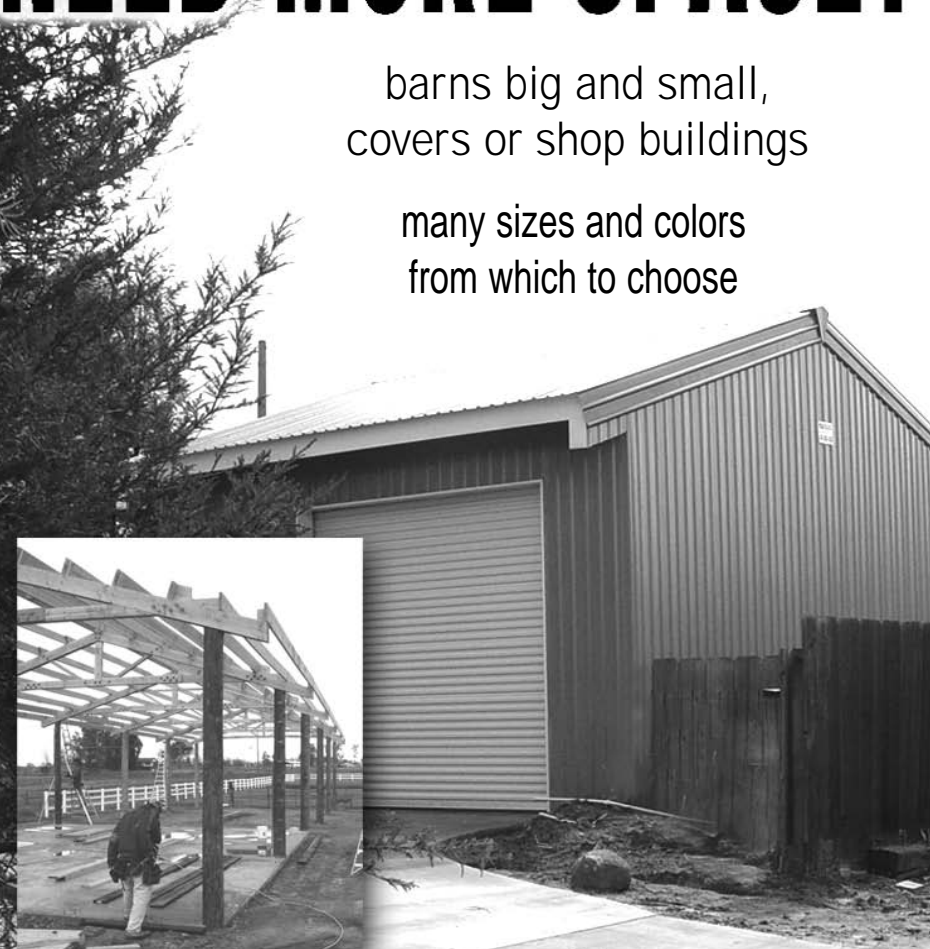


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