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Vol. 4, Issue 17 January 27th, 2026



## Governor Gianforte Recognizes School Choice Week in Montana

**State** By Kaitlin Timken, Office of the Governor: January 26, 2026 - Helena, Mt



Gov. Gianforte reading to elementary students at a Helena public school in February 2023. Photo credit Office of the Governor

Governor Greg Gianforte today recognized School Choice Week in Montana, celebrating the important role parents play in their children's education and the wide range of high-quality educational opportunities available to Montana families.

"Parents know their children best, and they should be empowered to choose the educational path that fits their child's needs," Gov. Gianforte said. "School Choice Week is an opportunity to recognize Montana's high-quality schools, home education options, and the dedicated educators who are committed to helping our kids succeed."

According to National School Choice Week, the nationally recognized campaign informs, inspires, and empowers parents to discover the K-12 education options available for their children and to raise awareness of traditional public, public charter, public magnet, private, online, home, and non-

*(Continued on page 2)*

## Little Learners Child Care Provides Nuturing Child Care for Community

**Business** By Karen Anderson: January 26, 2026 - Great Falls, Mt

On April 28, 2025, Jacob Ortado and his wife proudly became the new owners of Little Learners Academy Inc., which is now rebranded as Little Learners Child Care. Conveniently located at 1818 19th Ave South, right across from Sunnyside Elementary, this child care center has been a cornerstone of the community for over 35 years.

Jacob and his wife bring a wealth of experience to the business, having worked in the child care sector for ten years. Their primary mission is to provide exceptional care for children while actively contributing to their growth and success as individuals.

Little Learners Child Care is open Monday through Friday from 6:30 AM to 6:30 PM, offering flexible hours to accommodate the needs of working parents.

"We are excited to join a growing community," explained Jacob. "That's what drew us here to begin with."

*(Continued on page 3)*



Photo credit Little Learners Child Care



**Your source for local news and information**

Table of Contents on page 2

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General Phone  
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Great Falls Gazette  
(Print ISSN: 2993-6950, Online ISSN: 2993-6969) is publishing semi-weekly by Foxys Publishing Co, 1601 2nd Ave N, Suite 345, Great Falls, MT 59401. Application to Mail at Periodicals Prices is Pending at Great Falls, MT. POSTMASTER Send address changes to Great Falls Gazette, 1601 2nd Ave N, Suite 345, Great Falls, MT 59401-3288



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Editor: Karen Anderson  
Publisher: Andy Anderson

Subscription coupon is located on page 3

## School Choice Week (Continued from page 1)

traditional learning environments. Each year, tens of thousands of schools and millions of parents and children raise awareness of K-12 education options during this week.

In Montana, Gov. Gianforte has prioritized increasing educational freedom for families as well as recruiting and supporting high-quality teachers. In 2023, the governor signed a pair of bills to authorize public charter schools and community choice schools in Montana and increased the caps of the Big Sky Scholarship Program and the Innovative Education Program from \$2 million to \$5 million, expanding access to education opportunities for children in low to middle-income families.

To support teachers, the governor in his first week in office introduced the TEACH Act, or Tomorrow's Educators Are Coming Home Act, to provide incentives to school districts to increase starting teacher pay. In its

first year, the TEACH Act helped nearly 500 teachers begin their careers in Montana. In 2023, the governor increased funding for the program by 40% and in 2025 the governor signed into law the STARS Act to invest a historic \$100 million to continue the successful program.

Last week, the governor announced Montana opted-in to the new Federal Tax Credit Scholarship Program to provide Montanans a tax credit when they donate to nonprofits that provide scholarships to K-12 students to expand education freedom. This federally funded tax credit scholarship program for elementary and secondary education will be effective beginning on January 1, 2027.

Gov. Gianforte this week proclaimed January 25 to January 31, 2026, as School Choice Week in Montana to empower parents and put them first in their children's education choices.

***Is there a previous issue you really enjoyed and would like to see again? We have digital archives of all previous issues that can be reprinted upon request. Call us at (406) 952-3021 or email us at [info@gfgazette.com](mailto:info@gfgazette.com) for more information.***

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<b>Business</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Living</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Celebrations</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>Market</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>CrimeStoppers</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>Obituaries</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Fun-E-Pages</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>Weather</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Legal</b>	<b>9</b>		

# Business

## Little Learners Child Care Provides

(Continued from page 1)

At Little Learners Child Care, they strive to create a nurturing and stimulating environment where young children can thrive and develop. They have a dedicated team that is passionate about fostering creativity, curiosity, and a love for learning in every child. Little Learners takes pride in a commitment to supporting military families and first responders, recognizing the importance of community and service. Their goal is to build a strong foundation for learning and fun, ensuring that each child receives the attention and care they deserve as they embark on their early educational journey.

them at llacenter@yahoo.com or call 406-761-3465 and let them know you found them in The Great Falls Gazette.



Photo credit Little Learners Child Care

For more information about Little Learners Child Care, please contact



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## Getting a Taste of the 2026 Olympics in Italy

By Donna Erickson



The 2026 Winter Olympics in Milan and Cortina d'Ampezzo, Italy, will be in full swing on televisions and screens all across America starting on Feb. 6. I love how the cameras put viewers like us in the middle of the action, as if we're standing on the sidelines as a skier comes racing by. Amidst the thrills, there's one thing that we miss out on, which are the mouthwatering smells and tastes of the local food that gets enjoyed by spectators throughout the event.

So, this year, I decided to make the Olympics a "total" cultural experience and create a taste of Italy by preparing a panini (Italian for "sandwich"). But hold the pickles, lettuce and mayo! Italians are known to love their panini with a drizzle of olive oil, balsamic vinegar or pesto on the bread.

They add good meat and cheese, then toast it on an electric grill. The heat intensifies the flavors and creates diagonal grill marks on the outside of the bread.

To create the same taste and effect, we make our panini on the stove with a basic grill pan and press them with a brick covered in tinfoil. If you don't have a brick, set another heavy skillet on top of the sandwich with soup cans to weight it down as it heats throughout.

To get you started, here's my simple, basic traditional recipe for 4-5 paninis that kids will love:

- 1 loaf of good Italian bread, such as ciabatta or focaccia
- Extra-virgin olive oil
- 20 fresh basil leaves
- 4 ounces thinly sliced prosciutto (optional)
- 4 ripe tomatoes, sliced
- 8 ounces fresh mozzarella cheese, sliced 1/4 inch thick

Slice bread for 4-5 paninis, then split each one in half horizontally. Drizzle bottom cut halves with olive oil and stack with basil, prosciutto, tomatoes and cheese. Top with bread.

Set panini on a heated, nonstick grill pan. Set bricks covered with tinfoil on top to compress the panini. Grill until cheese softens. Flip over and toast on second sides, again with the bricks on top.

Set on a plate and let yourself be transported to Italy as you take your first bite.



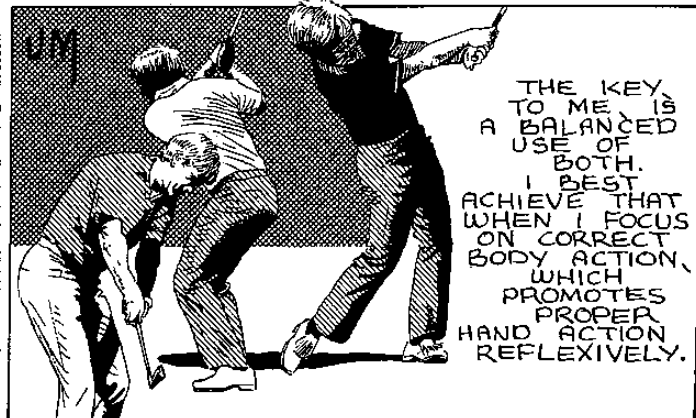
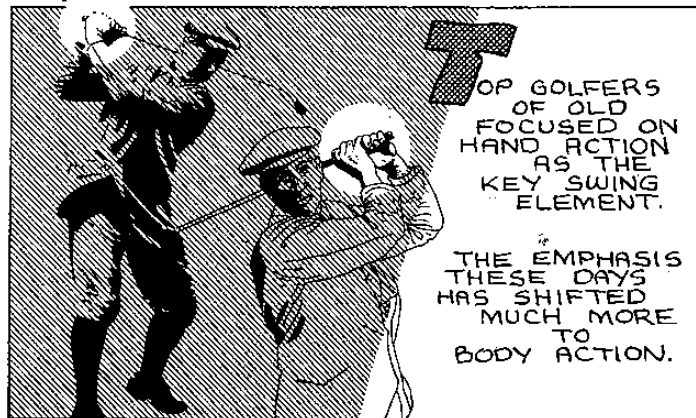
Photo credit Donna Erickson

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Donna Erickson creates relationships and community through food and fun. Find more to nourish and delight you at [www.donnaerickson.com](http://www.donnaerickson.com).

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## Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS





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## Contract Bridge

By Steve Becker

### SCIENCE OF CARD-READING

North dealer.

Both sides vulnerable.

#### NORTH

♠ 10 6  
♥ A Q 10 4  
♦ Q J 10 8 4  
♣ A 9

#### WEST

♠ K 9 4 2  
♥ 7 5  
♦ A 6  
♣ K Q 6 4 2

#### EAST

♠ 8 7 5 3  
♥ J 9 6 3  
♦ 7 3 2  
♣ J 5

#### SOUTH

♠ A Q J  
♥ K 8 2  
♦ K 9 5  
♣ 10 8 7 3

The bidding:

<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>	<b>West</b>
1 ♦	Pass	2 NT	Pass
3 NT			

Opening lead — four of clubs.

When declarer starts the play of a hand, he usually doesn't know much about how the defenders' cards are distributed. This is especially true when the opponents have remained silent during the auction.

This does not mean, however, that declarer must rely on a lot of guesswork when the opponents haven't bid. In many cases, the lie of the opposing cards can be inferred by drawing conclusions from the early plays made by the defense. This is where much of the skill in declarer play comes to the fore.

Today's hand provides a relatively simple exercise in card-reading. West leads a low club against three notrump. How should South proceed?

To begin with, it is reasonable to assume that West does not have the K-Q-J of clubs because, if he had that holding, he would have led the king and not the four. It follows, therefore, that East must have at least one of the missing club honors.

It is also almost certain that West has led from either a four- or five-card suit, which marks East with either two or three clubs.

The contract is not in danger if West has only a four-card suit. The most that can be lost in that case is three clubs and a diamond. Declarer's primary concern, therefore, is to guard against West's having a five-card suit.

This can be accomplished by going up with the ace of clubs at trick one and immediately driving out the ace of diamonds. West will then be unable to cash four club tricks, because East's now-singleton club honor prevents the suit from being run.

Observe, though, that if declarer plays a low club from dummy on the opening trick, he allows the defenders to untangle their clubs. In the actual deal, he would be defeated after East won with the jack and returned a club.

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# Obituaries

## Obituary of Jean Peres

In Loving Memory of Jean Peres July 25, 1933 ~ January 17, 2026



Jean was born in 1933 and lived a life rich with love, faith, adventure, and deep family devotion. She grew up during the Great Depression, learning early the values of resilience, gratitude, and making the most of what you have. As the eldest sister, she lovingly cared for her younger sister and held her brothers close to her heart, especially during the years they served in the war. Family always came first for Jean.

Her Catholic faith was the foundation of her life. She lived it daily, raising her children with strong values, kindness, and compassion. As a teenager, Jean

was a cheerleader at her Catholic high school, where fate stepped in—she met the love of her life, Fred, a football player from the public high school across town. Their love story became a lifelong partnership, and they shared an incredible 61 years of marriage filled with laughter, teamwork, and unwavering devotion. In Jean's heart she was married to Fred for 73 years.

Together, they raised their children, and Jean made sure her home was full of warmth, faith, and fun. One of her greatest gifts was her ability to turn ordinary moments into joyful memories. Whether it was blowing a ping pong ball across what we called The Clampett Dinner Table making sure that it did not fall off the table and, thus, the winner being the one whose ball stayed on the table, or, creating a feast from just a few ingredients, and making it the best tasting best meal ever. She had a magical way of making everything special.

Jean stood proudly beside her husband through every season of life. While he worked as a firefighter and ran several side businesses, she supported him wholeheartedly in his profession and his many side businesses. Sundays often meant packing up a homemade dinner and bringing it to the firehouse so the whole family could eat together, or on the holidays, the whole big family, grandparents, aunts, uncles and

cousins would gather at our home for her most delicious turkey dinners and spaghetti dinners. She always made sure there was enough for everyone.

Dad's side businesses meant that, when needed, she picked up the reins and drove a garbage truck, handled racehorses (thus the reins!), ran the family concession stand at the Montana State Fair each year, helped run our family restaurant, Pete's Drive-In on the west side of town, did books for all the businesses, including the bar, The Red Door. Now, on top of all that plus raising us kids! Jean worked at Hoglund's, and she worked many years in the office at McDonald's—where everyone affectionately called her "Mom." Wherever she went, she became family. Jean was truly unstoppable!

She was fiercely devoted to her husband, children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, nieces, nephews, friends, and her church community. Jean was strength in human form—steady, loyal, hardworking, and full of heart. Every person who knew her felt loved by her.

In her later years at Evergreen Fountains, Jean continued to shine. She was known for her spunk, her smile, and her fearless spirit. She was always ready for a challenge and never lost her spark.

*(Continued on page 8)*



**Obituary and death notices are a difficult fact of life. They are a reminder of those we have loved and lost. The Great Falls Gazette does not require payment for submission of local obituaries or death notices, however, you are welcome to donate to our many programs to help people in our community to receive newspapers that they can enjoy. To submit an obituary or death notice, email them to [info@gfgazette.com](mailto:info@gfgazette.com) or call us at (406) 952-3021**

## Obituary of Jean Peres

(Continued from page 7)

Jean leaves behind a legacy of love, laughter, faith, and family. She will be deeply missed by all who were blessed to know her, and her spirit will live on in the countless lives she touched.

Jean was preceded in death by her husband, Fred; son, Jimmie, and son-in-law, Mike.

Jean is survived by her children, Janet (Peter), Valarie, Freddie (Cindy), and Rick; grandchildren, Brandon, Dylan, Dustin, Bridger, Spencer, Drake, Hunter, Kris and Amy; great-grandchildren, Rylee, Jersey, Finley, Rhett, Pike, Sullivan,

Alexander, Luella, Violet, Georgi, Grady, Gabby, and Annie; and all her many nieces and nephews, with special mention of Cheri.

She loved us all with her whole heart and she prayed for us every day.

Jean said this prayer every day, along with saying her rosary ...

“Lord, walk with me today. Guide me in your way. If I should stumble along the way, please Lord, pick me up and carry me the rest of the day” God’s Blessings.

Mom requested a graveside service with no flowers because she can’t

smell them anyway ~ instead she just wanted lots of prayers so she can get to Heaven...

Graveside Services, Thursday, January 29, 2026, at 1:00 p.m. are at Mount Olivet Cemetery at 2101 26th St. South, Great Falls, Montana. A Life Celebration is after the service at the It’ll Do Bar, 1800 3rd St. NW, Great Falls, MT ... she wouldn’t want it any other way!

Condolences for the family may be shared online at [www.SchniderFuneralHome.com](http://www.SchniderFuneralHome.com).



## Obituary of Edward Rehor

Edward Andrew Rehor Obituary Edward Rehor, 91, peacefully passed away in his sleep December 15, 2025, in Great Falls, Montana.

He was born on April 5, 1934, to Andrew and Susan Rehor in Sand Coulee, Montana. He was a life-long Montanan whose life reflected dedication, craftsmanship, and love for the outdoors. Edward served his country with honor as a member of the United States Marine Corps during the Korean war. After his military service, he spent many years working for the Anaconda Company and later as a painter for the school system.

His strong work ethic and resourcefulness also led him to be a skilled handyman. Edward built both his own home and his father’s home. His creativity continued across generations as he constructed playhouses for his children and great-granddaughter.

Edward had a great love for the outdoors and loved to camp, hunt, and fish. He built a cabin in Lincoln, Montana and spent many weekends enjoying his time on the Blackfoot river. He also pursued hobbies such as building and later clock making. He was a loyal Green Bay Packers fan.



He was preceded in death by his beloved wife, Beverly, with whom he shared 63 years of marriage and his son, Jeff Rehor. He is survived by his sister, Anna May Erickson; children, Casey Tucker (Steve), Chris Rehor (Becky), Charla Scardon (Chuck), and Andrea Maher; five grandchildren, Courtney, Kal, Alex, Michael, and Nick; and five great-grandchildren, Tucker, Tayden, Silas, Otto, and Harper who affectionately referred to him as Grandpa Great!

Edward requested no service or obituary but sorry Dad we wanted everyone to know what an incredible life you led.

Edward’s family would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to the Grandview Senior rehab and Senior living. Condolences for the family may be shared online at [www.OConnorFuneralHome.com](http://www.OConnorFuneralHome.com).



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# Fun 'E' Pages



## 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.

	+			×		=	70
+		+			-		
		-		×		=	6
÷		+			+		
	+		+			=	15
=		=		=			
6		16		10			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8 9

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Puzzle answers can be found on page 11.

## Just Like Cats & Dogs

by Dave T. Phipps

I FOLLOWED MOST OF THE RECIPE.  
IT'S PROBABLY FINE DESPITE THE  
WAY IT LOOKS...AND SMELLS...RIGHT?



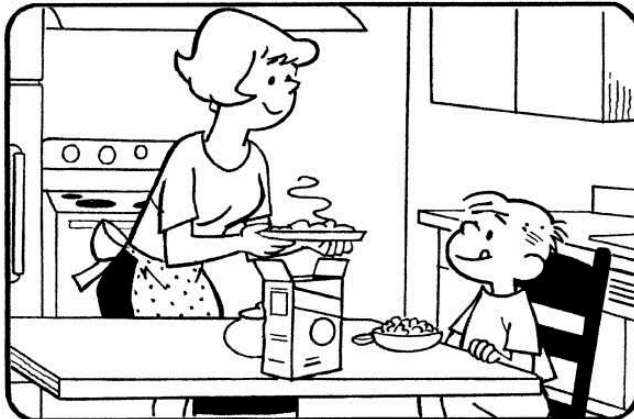
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## HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



Differences: 1. Back of chair is different. 2. Box is different lower. 6. Stove hood is wider. 3. Collar is missing. 4. Burner is missing. 5. Refrigerator handle is

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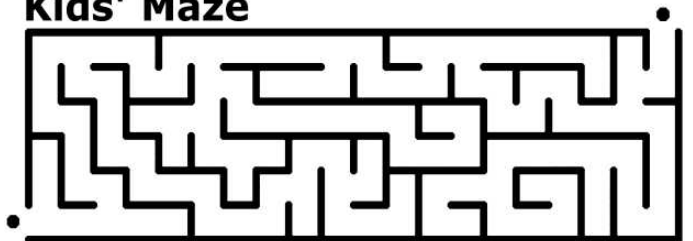
## MINI SUDOKU

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	5			3	
	3				5

Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 6-box square contains all of the numbers from one to six.

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## Kids' Maze



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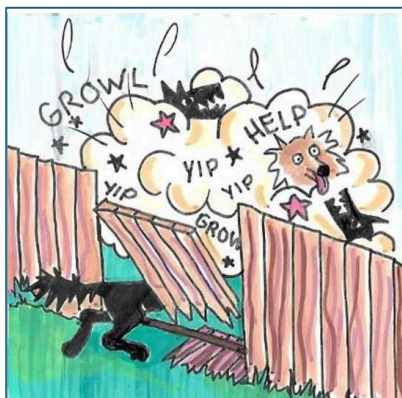
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## **THE MISADVENTURES OF TIPPER AND BANDIT**

### **BANDIT IS ATTACKED IN HIS OWN YARD \***

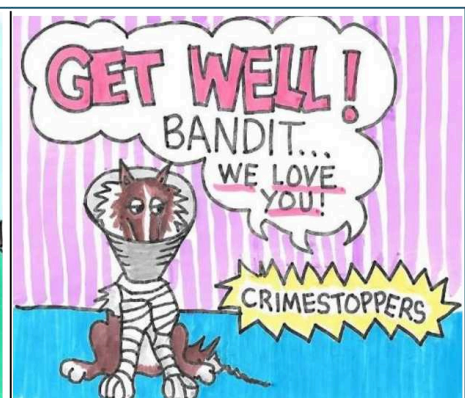
Created by Patricia Hahn Schlaeger - 2026



A pack of dogs breaks into Bandit's yard and attacks him ....



Tipper finds Bandit and calls for help to care for serious wounds



Bandit has started treatment and thanks Tipper for his rescue

**\* Unfortunately this is a true story!** Bandit was seriously injured by dogs who broke into his yard. When 2 or more dogs get together the pack mentality takes over and they become dangerous to other dogs and people. **Great Falls City Code:** It is unlawful for any person, persons or family to keep, harbor, or maintain in or on the same premises a total of more than two (2) cats or two (2) dogs of four (4) months of age or older without first obtaining a multiple animal permit as provided in OCCGF §6.1.090.

**Please keep Bandit in your prayers for his complete recovery!!**

# Local Weather For Great Falls

NWS Forecast for: Cascade County below 5000ft  
Issued by: National Weather Service Great Falls, MT  
Last Update: [11:23 am MST Jan 26, 2026]

**Tuesday** Sunny, with a high near 45. Southwest wind 8 to 13 mph, with gusts as high as 20 mph.

**Tuesday Night** Mostly cloudy, with a low around 26. Southwest wind 8 to 10 mph.

**Wednesday** Mostly cloudy, with a high near 47. Southwest wind 10 to 16 mph, with gusts as high as 23 mph.

**Wednesday Night** Mostly cloudy, with a low around 30. Southwest wind 9 to 11 mph, with gusts as high as 20 mph.

**Thursday** Mostly sunny, with a high near 49. Southwest wind 9 to 14 mph, with gusts as high as 23 mph.

**Thursday Night** Mostly cloudy, with a low around 33. Southwest wind 8 to 10 mph.

**Friday** Mostly cloudy, with a high near 52.

**Friday Night** Mostly cloudy, with a low around 36.

**Keep an eye on the weather all week long, you can get a monthly subscription to Tuesday, Thursday, and Sunday of the Gazette for about the price of three large lattes!**



***Happy Anniversary to my husband Tim Treacy. I honestly don't think anyone will ever love me as much as you did. I miss you, I miss us. Til we meet again.  
Love always, your wife Lisa***



***Celebrations is a great way to say "Happy Birthday", "Happy Anniversary", "Congratulations", or other positive messages to share with the whole city. It's a great way to be positive in a challenging world; it's fun, and it's FREE! You can even include a small (tastefully fun) photo! Just email info@gfgazette.com or call 406 952-3021, and we'll get the positive word out.***

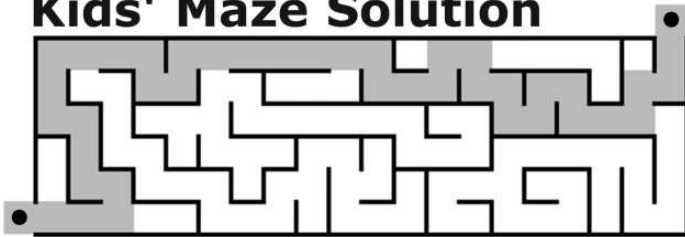
Go Figure!

answers					
2	+	8	×	7	= 70
+		+		-	
4	-	3	×	6	= 6
÷		+		+	
1	+	5	+	9	= 15
=		=		=	
6		16		10	

MINI SUDOKU

Answer					
5	6	4	2	1	3
2	1	3	5	6	4
3	2	5	6	4	1
1	4	6	3	5	2
4	5	2	1	3	6
6	3	1	4	2	5

Kids' Maze Solution



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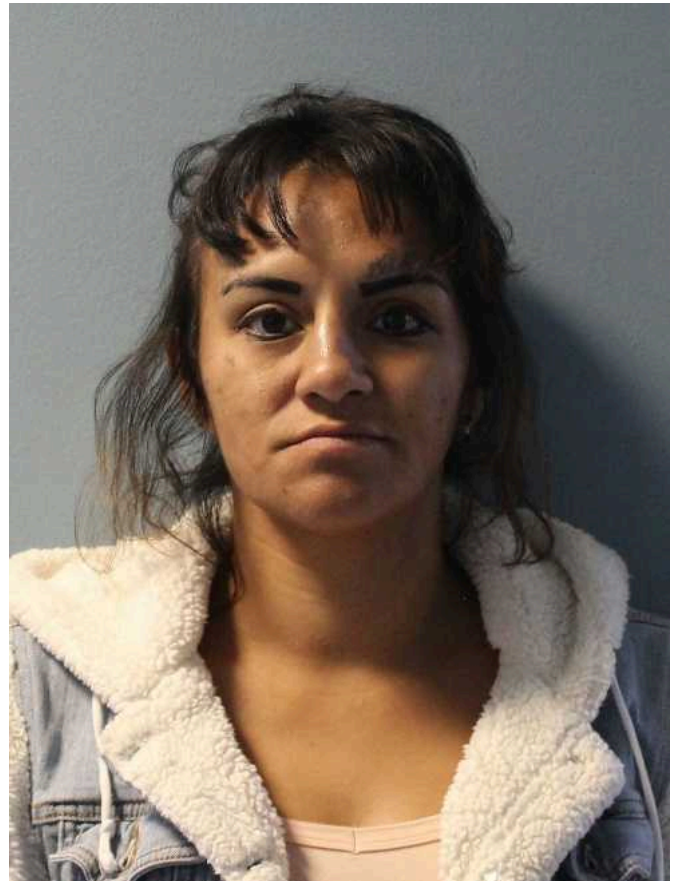
CrimeStoppers Most Wanted



Donate to CrimeStoppers here

Great Falls/Cascade County Crimestoppers, the Great Falls Police Department, and the Cascade County Sheriff's Office make every effort to keep the Most Wanted list current. We cannot guarantee the currency of the information. If you have reason to believe that any of the information contained on the list is inaccurate, call the Cascade County Sheriff's Office at (406) 454-6820 Monday through Friday between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m.

If you have any information to report, please call (406) 727-8477 (TIPS) or go to P3TIPS.COM (For a situation in progress, call 911). All callers remain anonymous and a reward can be paid for tips leading to an arrest. Help keep our community safe by sharing this information.



**Shawl, Cerenity Marie:** 36 yoa, Native American female, 5'6", 140#, brown eyes, brown hair, wanted on: violation of the terms of suspended sentence on criminal possession of dangerous drugs, felony. Total bond \$10,000.

**Civilized letters to the editor may be sent to [letters@gfgazette.com](mailto:letters@gfgazette.com) or mailed to Letter**

**To The Editor, 1601 2nd Ave N, Suite 345,**

**Great Falls, MT 59401. Letters must include name**

**(we print first name, last initial), hometown, and either a phone number or email address.**

**Letters that attack others, are patently untrue, or are of a harmful nature WILL be rejected!**



## Hey You!!!

Do you have a great idea for a news story, a news tip, or would you like to even write a story? We'd love to help get the word out! I love news about all of our communities, and you can help us get it out there. It's easy, and in some cases you can even get paid.

Everything from Human Interest stories, news items, sports reports and scores, even a review of the local school talent show or science fair, everyone in your community needs YOU to help get the word out. Call (406) 952-3021 and speak to the news desk today!



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## After 2024 and 2025, it's time for some DEFLATION!

Here at the Gazette, we've decided it's high time that Great Falls Experience a little deflation after all the inflation we've dealt with for the past few years.

We're announcing lower cover prices, with more publication days starting in February, 2026. The Great Falls Gazette has proven that we are all about Great Falls, and we are already the go-to source for local information, life stories, events, and all the news we can all use. The little paper that did will finally be a daily that you can look forward to, with news that matters to you!

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