



## Replacing STAAR test gains political interest

*New tests would measure student growth across the year as opposed to only pass or fail*

By Alfredo Vasquez  
Special to the Courier

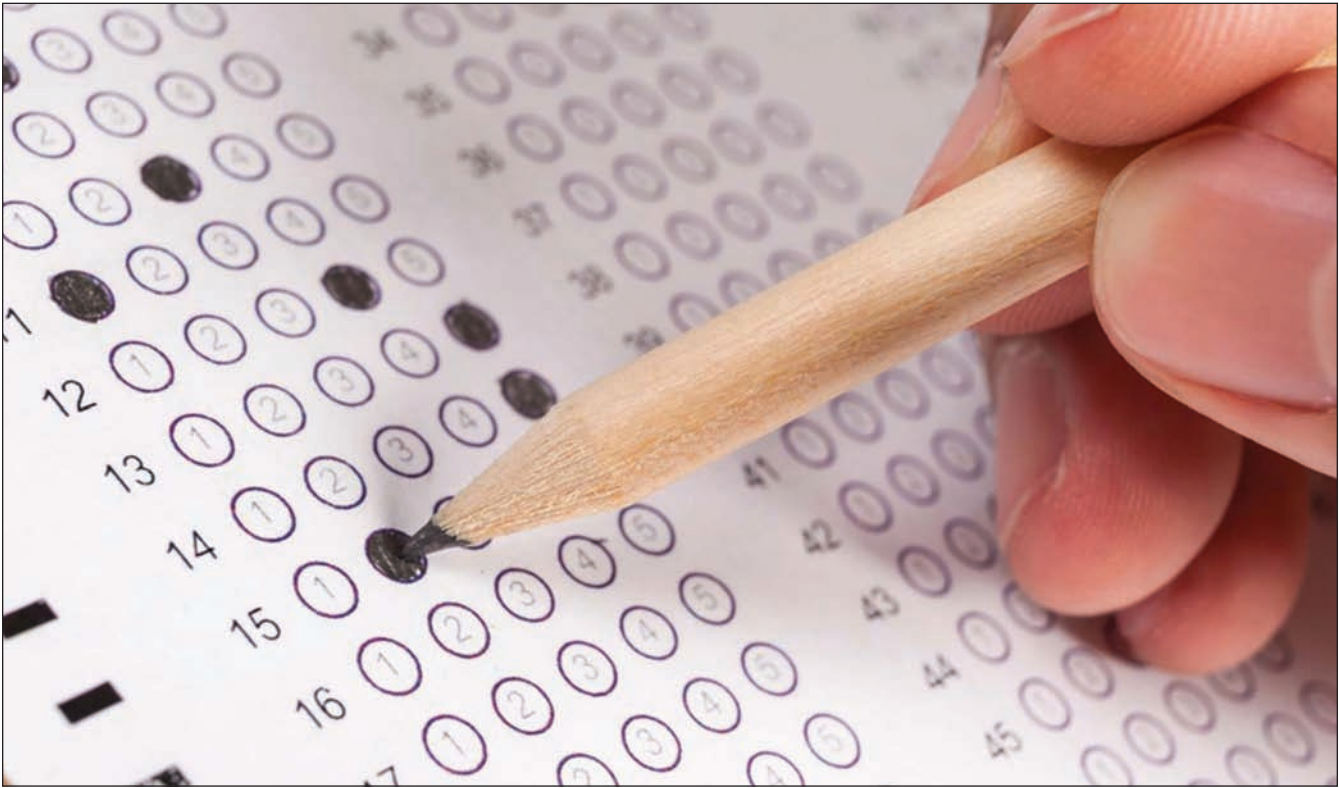
TEXAS – Texas lawmakers are once again talking about revamping the way students, campuses, and school districts are assessed to ensure that all three are meeting performance standards.

After hearing constituents’ criticism about how students face immense pressure when taking the current testing instrument called STAAR (State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness), a hours-long, end-of-the-year test which is used to grade their schools’ performance, state legislators indicated recently that they are ready to enact change.

With that in mind, the Senate Committee on Education K-16 is supporting Senate Bill 8 (SB 8) which would eliminate the STAAR test and replace it with the existing Beginning of Year (BOY), Middle of Year (MOY) and End of Year (EOY) tests.

State officials stated that the BOY and MOY tests would be adaptive, meaning the questions change depending on if the question before it is answered correctly or not. This format, they maintained, would allow the tests to produce more data with fewer questions. The tests also deliver results more quickly, within as few as two days, which proponents say allow parents to have more time to discuss results with teachers and improve their child’s learning.

Although Texas Education Agency (TEA) officials



GET OUT YOUR PENCILS – The STAAR test was first implemented in 2012 and is a once-yearly standardized test offered to students starting in 3rd grade and continuing through high school in certain subjects.

have stated that the STAAR test is a reliable tool to measure academic achievement, TEA Commissioner Mike Morath recently said, “When you get a BOY, you can see how much you grew from the end of last year, and MOY, how much you’ve grown since the BOY and then the EOY, how much you grew since the middle of the year. That way, teachers and the other educational staff have immediate access to those results to begin changing instructional practices.”

Under the proposed legislation, standardized testing would continue to be a big metric in calculating school performance under Texas’ A-F school ratings system and would also designate the TEA commissioner as the sole authority to review those standards.

“The bottom line is that what gets measured gets fixed, and this bill measures student success in a fairer way,” stated Sen. Paul Bettencourt, of Houston, who has been a chief negotiator on the issue.

Additionally, the proposed legislation comes with some new checks to ensure that the test and the school ratings system are fair. It calls for the creation of a committee – which would include staff from the governor, lieutenant governor, and the house speaker – to evaluate any changes to the school ratings system. The state would also initiate an independent study of the new exam to evaluate whether questions on the test match grade-level difficulty, state officials noted.

SB 8 mostly resembles the final proposal that

*The bottom line is that what gets measured gets fixed, and this bill measures student success in a fairer way.*

– Sen. Paul Bettencourt

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## Franco earns advanced law enforcement certification



WELL TRAINED – Lt. Heriberto Franco is the first LECOP certified officer in El Paso County.

By Drew Blash  
Special to the Courier

EL PASO COUNTY – Lieutenant Heriberto Franco has earned a Law Enforcement Command Officer Program (LECOP) certification from the Texas Police Chiefs Association (TPCA). Franco serves at the Transmountain and Northwest campuses for El Paso Community College (EPCC). This distinguished credential places Franco among an elite group of command-level officers across the state and marks him as the first officer in El Paso County to achieve this honor.

The LECOP program provides cutting-edge leadership, management, and criminal justice training to help command officers excel in their roles and advance their organizations.

Over an 18-month period, Franco completed 250 hours of coursework in 10 different Texas cities, requiring 13 separate trips. The rigorous curriculum challenged participants to think critically about the future of policing and the leadership qualities necessary to guide modern law enforcement agencies.

For Franco, the motivation to pursue LECOP stemmed from a commitment to lifelong learning and a desire to grow as a leader. “I wanted to enhance my ability to make a meaningful impact within my department and contribute more effectively to the development of those around me,” he said.

The training reinforced his belief that “policing is one of the most noble professions” and deepened his

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# Hamas is to blame for Gaza’s woes

Hamas started a war, rejected a ceasefire and stole and profited from humanitarian aid, and we are supposed to believe that it’s all Israel’s fault. International attention is focused on food shortages in Gaza, with the blame and the pressure – as always – on Israel to do something about it. It is always difficult to get to the ground truth in Gaza, which is shrouded in the fog of war, of Hamas propaganda and of slanted media coverage, but there appears indeed to be a brewing humanitarian crisis. Israel stopped shipments of aid into Gaza in March after a temporary ceasefire expired, and then started them up again in May, using the so-called Israel- and U.S.-backed Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF) as the conduit. The stoppage in

aid, coupled with inadequate GHF operations, has led to the current situation. It’s necessary to understand the larger context, though. Israel halted food shipments as a means to deny Hamas revenue, not to target the general population. The terror group had perfected the art of exploiting humanitarian aid (and commercial transactions) for its own purposes via theft and taxes, plowing the proceeds into its military operations. Although there is now an effort by Israel’s critics to portray the concern over Hamas profiteering as fabricated or exaggerated, there is no doubt that this business model was crucial to the terror group. Both The Wall Street Journal (“A Depleted Hamas

Is So Low on Cash That It Can’t Pay Its Fighters”) and The Washington Post (“Hamis Facing Financial and Administrative Crisis as Revenue Dries Up”) have run reports on the squeeze felt by Hamas. The Journal article back in April noted that the cash crunch with the cut off in aid was “making it harder for Hamas to bring in new recruits and maintain cohesion.” The Washington Post reported about a week ago: “With its coffers depleted, Hamas’s military wing can no longer adequately

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## Franco

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understanding of the core values that define effective leadership, nobility, honesty, integrity, dignity, and respect. One of the most impactful lessons, he shared, was the concept of “Policing the

Police” and the five guiding principles for leadership in law enforcement: character, competence, compassion, courage, and commitment. As he brings his new expertise back to EPCC, Franco intends to continue leading in a positive and inspiring way while fostering professional growth among his

colleagues. “I’m honored to be the first in El Paso County to earn this certification, and I look forward to applying what I’ve learned to serve our community with excellence,” he said. Franco encourages other officers to seek out similar leadership opportunities. “Participating in LECOP

was a true privilege, it provided the chance to learn from outstanding instructors and connect with forward-thinking law enforcement professionals. The knowledge and strategies I gained have

significantly strengthened my leadership capabilities.” TPCA’s LECOP certification is recognized statewide as a hallmark of professional excellence for law enforcement leaders.

## Lower Valley Water District Public Notice

The LOWER VALLEY WATER DISTRICT is proposing to amend its rate order to include the following changes:

- \$1.00 increase to the Water and Wastewater Base Rate for both Residential and Commercial Customers.
- 15% increase to the Residential Customer and Commercial Customer Volumetric Rate for customers using over 10 CCFs (hundred cubic feet) per billing cycle.

The LOWER VALLEY WATER DISTRICT will hold a public hearing on the proposed monthly Water and Wastewater Rates on Thursday, September 18, 2025, at 5:15 p.m. at 1557 FM 1110, Clint, Texas 79836.

The rate is attributable to the increase in wholesale water rates and wastewater treatment rates experienced by LOWER VALLEY WATER DISTRICT.

### Non-Residential/Commercial Water & Wastewater Base Rates

| Meter Size | Water Minimum   |          | Wastewater Minimum   |          |
|------------|---|----------|--|----------|
|            | Minimum Charge for Water<br>Level 1: 0.00 – 4.00 CCFs |          | Minimum Charge for Wastewater<br>Level 1: 0.00 – 5.00 CCFs |          |
|            | Current   | Proposed | Current  | Proposed |
| ¾”         | \$32.90   | \$33.90  | \$32.90  | \$33.90  |
| 1”         | \$51.00   | \$52.00  | \$51.00  | \$52.00  |
| 1 ½        | \$71.25   | \$72.25  | \$71.25  | \$72.25  |
| 2”         | \$91.25   | \$92.25  | \$91.25  | \$92.25  |
| 3”         | \$107.75  | \$108.75 | \$107.75   | \$108.75 |
| 4”         | \$124.25  | \$125.25 | \$124.25   | \$125.25 |
| 6”         | \$151.75  | \$152.75 | \$151.75   | \$152.75 |
| 8”         | \$183.25  | \$184.25 | \$183.25   | \$184.25 |
| 10”        | \$323.67  | \$324.67 | \$323.67   | \$324.67 |
| 12”        | \$550.00  | \$551.00 |  |          |

### Residential Water & Wastewater Base Rates

| Meter Size | Water Minimum   |          | Wastewater Minimum   |          |
|------------|---|----------|--|----------|
|            | Minimum Charge for Water<br>Level 1: 0.00 – 4.00 CCFs |          | Minimum Charge for Wastewater<br>Level 1: 0.00 – 5.00 CCFs |          |
|            | Current   | Proposed | Current  | Proposed |
| ¾”         | \$17.25   | \$18.25  | \$30.00  | \$31.00  |
| 1”         | \$31.00   | \$32.00  |  |          |
| 1 ½        | \$36.25   | \$37.25  |  |          |
| 2”         | \$41.25   | \$42.25  |  |          |

### Volumetric Rates

| Tiers                 | Commercial |          | Residential |          |
|-----------------------|------------|----------|-------------|----------|
|                       | Current    | Proposed | Current     | Proposed |
| 2 (10.01 to 50 CCFs): | \$3.85     | \$4.43   | \$3.85      | \$4.43   |
| 3 (Over 50 CCFs):     | \$4.80     | \$5.52   | \$4.80      | \$5.52   |

WTCC: 08-21-25

## STAAR

From Page 1

House lawmakers came up with during the regular session. Apparently all that needs to be ironed out are a few points including whether the Legislature or the TEA commissioner gets the final say on setting the ratings systems standards; how to deal with school districts that sue to block their accountability ratings; and whether to keep a mandatory social studies test.

The STAAR test was first implemented in 2012 and is a once-yearly standardized test offered to students starting in 3rd grade and continuing through high school in certain subjects. The STAAR test was designed to be completed in three hours, but testing sessions can go up to seven hours. That can be difficult for young students or children with special needs, who may struggle to sit still and focus on an exam for that long.

Teachers also describe losing valuable instructional time to “teach to the test.” According to a recent survey of teachers across the state, about eight in 10 teachers said preparing for STAAR is a barrier to good teaching.

For now, students will continue to take the STAAR test for the next two years. TEA has until the 2027-28 school year to revise the new testing format.



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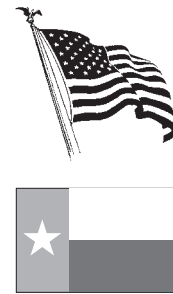
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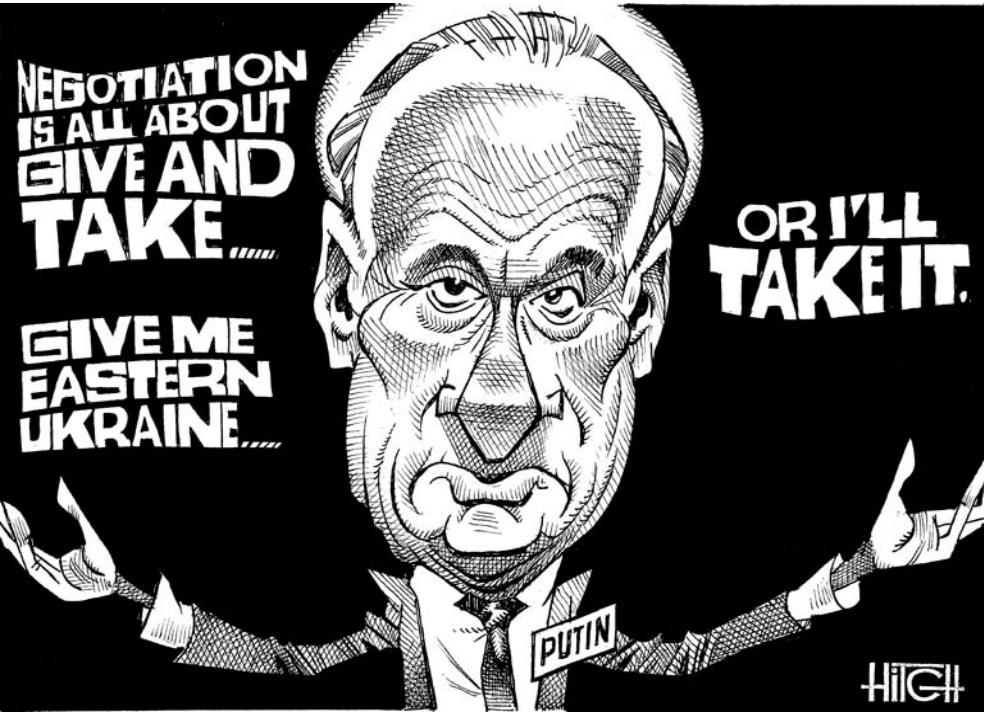
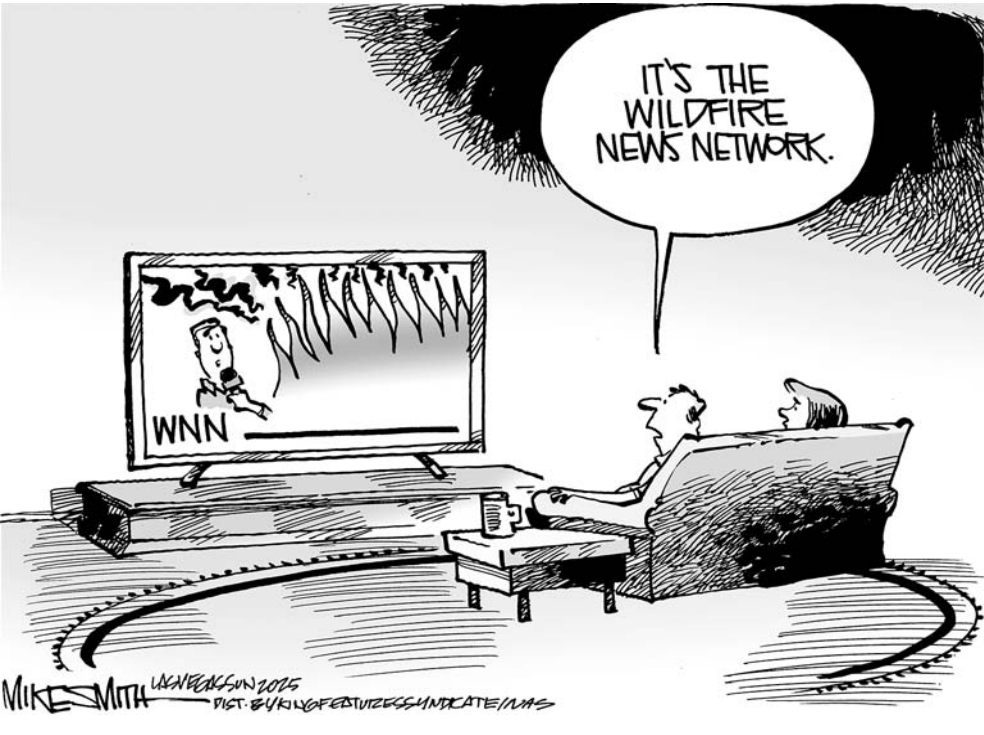
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# Haciendas del Norte Water Improvement District Notice of Public Hearing on Tax Rate

The Haciendas Del Norte Water Improvement District will hold a public hearing on a proposed tax rate for the tax year 2025 on September 2, 2025 at 13931 Sagebrush Circle, El Paso, Texas 79938 at 7:00 pm. Your individual taxes may increase at a greater or lesser rate, or even decrease, depending on the tax rate that is adopted and on the change in the taxable value of your property in relation to the change in taxable of all other property. The change in the taxable value of your property in relation to the change in the taxable value of all other property determines the distribution of the tax burden among all property owners.

Visit [Texas.gov/PropertyTaxes](https://www.texas.gov/PropertyTaxes) to find a link to your local property tax database on which you can easily access information regarding your property taxes, including information about proposed tax rates and scheduled public hearings of each entity that taxes your property.

- FOR** the proposal:
- Joseph McCandless, Daniel Diaz  
Michael Spicer, George Gibson
- AGAINST** the proposal:
- NONE
- PRESENT** and not voting:
- NONE
- ABSENT:**
- Ed Brown

The following table compares taxes on an average residence homestead in this taxing unit last year to taxes proposed on the average residence homestead this year.

|   | Last Year          | This Year        |
|---|--------------------|------------------|
| Total tax rate (per \$100 value)  | \$0.044517/\$100   | \$0.043219/\$100 |
|   | Adopted            | Proposed         |
| Difference in rates per \$100 of value  |                    | \$ -0.001298     |
| Percentage increase / decrease in rates (+/-)   |                    | -2.916%          |
| Average appraised value   | \$ 355,345         | \$ 378,791       |
| General homestead exemptions available (excluding 65 years of age or older or disabled person's exemptions) | \$ -               | \$ -             |
| Average residence homestead taxable value   | \$ 355,345         | \$ 378,791       |
| Tax on average residence homestead  | \$ 158.18          | \$ 163.71        |
| Annual increase / decrease in taxes if proposed tax rate is adopted (+/-) and percentage of increase (+/-)  | \$ +5.53<br>+3.50% |                  |

## NOTICE OF VOTE ON TAX RATE

If the district adopts a combined debt service, operation and maintenance and contract tax rate that would result in the taxes on the average residence homestead increasing by more than 3.5 percent, an election must be held to determine whether to approve the operation and maintenance tax rate under Section 49.3602, Water Code. An election is not required if the adopted rate is less than or equal to the voter-approval tax rate.

The 86th Texas Legislature modified the manner in which the voter-approval tax rate is calculated to limit the rate of growth of property taxes in the state.

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That young guy loves to dress really smartly, so I told him, “You’ve been a very natty boy!”

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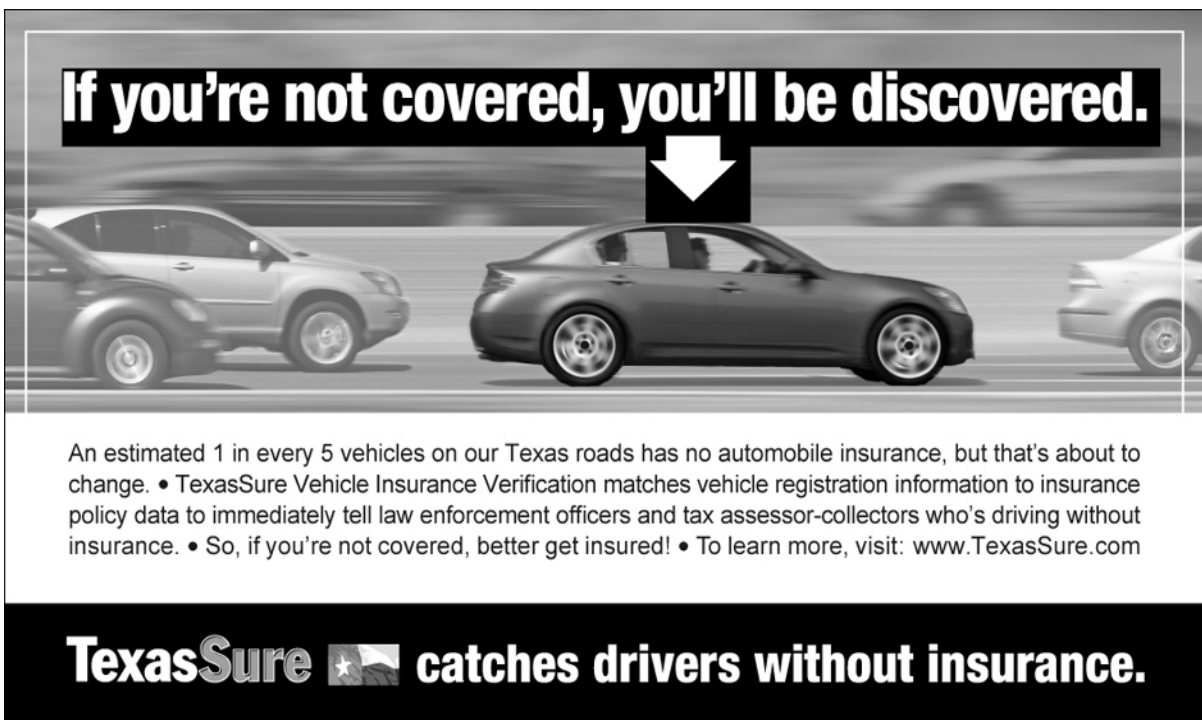
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24 Elbow counterpart  
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27 Right angle  
28 Cleopatra's river  
29 Hardy heroine  
31 Cure-all  
34 Hanoi holiday  
35 Composer Mahler  
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38 Campus area  
39 Nullify  
40 IRS enforcer  
41 Church section  
44 Acapulco gold  
45 Cain's mom  
46 Neither mate  
47 Former Delta rival

**Answer Page 4**

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EPCC scholarships available

EL PASO COUNTY – El Paso Community College (EPCC) has opened applications for its *Student Success Endowment Scholarship*, which is available to students who have completed the admission process at EPCC, have completed a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and are eligible for in-state tuition. The scholarship will cover up to eight hours of in-state tuition and mandatory fees per semester for up to six consecutive semesters.

Visit [go.epcc.edu/scholarships](http://go.epcc.edu/scholarships) for more information about the *Student Success Endowment Scholarship* and how to apply. Application closes August 29th.

– Beau Bagley



Moments in time  
THE HISTORY CHANNEL

- On Aug. 18, 1992, Boston Celtics forward Larry Bird retired at the age of 35, explaining that “the last couple of years have been very tough on me, on my back and on my body. It was very hard to deal with, day in and day out.” He has remained involved with the NBA in other roles, however, to the present day.
  - On Aug. 19, 2011, the “West Memphis Three” – Damien Echols, Jason Baldwin and Jessie Misskelley – were released from prison after serving 18 years for the murders of three young Arkansas boys, under the rarely used Alford plea, which allowed them to maintain their innocence while acknowledging that prosecutors still possessed sufficient evidence to convict them.
  - On Aug. 20, 2000, the peregrine falcon, known as the world’s fastest bird for its speed of up to 200 mph, was removed from America’s endangered species list after a little more than three decades. A ban on the pesticide DDT was widely credited for the bird’s resurgence.
  - On Aug. 21, 1920, Christopher Robin Milne was born to author A.A. Milne and his wife, Daphne. The boy would later be immortalized in his father’s books “Winnie-the-Pooh” and “The House at Pooh Corner.”
  - On Aug. 22, 1962, French president Charles de Gaulle, along with his wife, survived one of several assassination attempts against him thanks to the superior suspension system of the presidential automobile, known as “La Déesse” (The Goddess), which allowed de Gaulle’s chauffeur to accelerate out of a front-wheel skid to safety.
  - On Aug. 23, 1945, President Harry S. Truman awarded U.S. Army Staff Sergeant Marcario Garcia the Medal of Honor. He was the first Mexican national to receive it. Garcia single-handedly cleared two German machine gun nests even after receiving multiple wounds.
  - On Aug. 24, 1814, an iconic portrait (actually a copy) of George Washington was removed from its frame at the White House to prevent its theft by British troops. Later, first lady Dolley Madison would take somewhat dramatic credit for supervising the act.
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By Lucie Winborne

- A whale shark’s spot pattern is as unique as a fingerprint.
  - While working as a weatherman in Indianapolis, late-night talk show host David Letterman once congratulated a tropical storm for being upgraded to a hurricane.
  - The estimated temperature at the sun’s core is 27 million degrees Fahrenheit.
  - The cash register, invented in 1870 by James Ritty, was originally dubbed “Ritty’s Incorruptible Cashier” and was designed to keep the employees of his saloon from stealing from him.
  - Actress Megan Mullally was fired from her role in “Finding Nemo” for refusing to reprise her high-pitched Karen Walker voice from the TV series “Will and Grace.”
  - Kids and adults with autism are immune to the effect of observing someone else yawn.
  - Since a Krispy Kreme donut contains 350 calories, and a 150-pound man can burn around 380 calories in 30 minutes, said fellow could burn off that quickie breakfast with a quarter-acre lawn mow – unless he simply preferred going to the gym.
  - Target will let customers breastfeed anywhere in the store.
  - Besides being the final resting place for many Hollywood celebrities, Forest Lawn in Southern California features a museum with rotating exhibits and special art, music and educational events.
  - It is possible to make actual cheese with bacteria from foot sweat.
  - And speaking of cheese, it’s the most stolen food in the world.
  - The previous record for the world’s longest train was broken by the BHP Iron Ore in 2001. Measuring 4.5 miles in length, it was made up of 682 wagons and required eight engines to run.
  - Research has shown that throughout a sofa’s life, it will host roughly 782 visitors.
  - Seventy percent of the dirt on your clothes is invisible.
- Thought for the Day: “If you don’t have wrinkles, you haven’t laughed enough.”
- Phyllis Diller
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Paseo del Este Municipal  
Utility District No. 10  
of El Paso County

Notice of Public Hearing on Tax Rate

The Paseo Del Este Municipal Utility District No. 10 of El Paso County will hold a public hearing on a proposed tax rate for the tax year 2025 on Tuesday, September 2, 2025, at 12:00 p.m., in person at the offices of Paseo del Este MUDs, 13034 Eastlake Boulevard, Suites D-E, El Paso, Texas 79928. Your individual taxes may increase at a greater or lesser rate, or even decrease, depending on the tax rate that is adopted and on the change in the taxable value of your property in relation to the change in taxable value of all other property. The change in the taxable value of your property in relation to the change in the taxable value of all other property determines the distribution of the tax burden among all property owners.

Visit [Texas.gov/PropertyTaxes](http://Texas.gov/PropertyTaxes) to find a link to your local property tax database on which you can easily access information regarding your property taxes, including information about proposed tax rates and scheduled public hearings of each entity that taxes your property.

FOR the proposal: Directors Luis Ortega, Greg Spence, Ysrael Valencia and George Mendez

AGAINST the proposal: NONE

PRESENT and not voting: NONE

ABSENT: NONE

The following table compares taxes on an average residence homestead in this taxing unit last year to taxes proposed on the average residence homestead this year.

|  | Last Year         | This Year    |
|--|-------------------|--------------|
|  | Adopted           | Proposed     |
| Total tax rate (per \$100 value)   | 0.6591/.\$100     | 0.6313/\$100 |
| Difference in rates per \$100 of value   | – \$0.0278        |              |
| Percentage increase / decrease in rates (+/–)  | – 3.22 %          |              |
| Average appraised value  | \$ 316,052        | \$ 329,981   |
| General exemptions available (excluding 65 years of age or older or disabled person’s exemptions)          | \$ –              | \$ –         |
| Average residence homestead taxable value  | \$ 316,052        | \$ 329,981   |
| Tax on average residence homestead   | \$ 2,083.10       | \$ 2,083.17  |
| Annual increase / decrease in taxes if proposed tax rate is adopted (+/–) and percentage of increase (+/–) | + \$0.07<br>0.00% |              |

NOTICE OF TAXPAYERS’ RIGHT TO ELECTION TO REDUCE TAX RATE

If the District adopts a combined debt service, operation and maintenance, and contract tax rate that would result in the taxes on the average residence homestead increasing by more than 3.5 percent, an election must be held to determine whether to approve the operation and maintenance tax rate under Section 49.23602, Water Code.

The 86th Texas Legislature modified the manner in which the voter-approval tax rate is calculated to limit the rate of growth of property taxes in the state.

# UTEP ready to kick off the season... almost

By Steve Escajeda  
*Special to the Courier*

It may be hard to believe but the 2025 UTEP football season kicks off next weekend when the Miners travel to Utah State on Aug. 30.

This is the first time in many years that plenty is expected from the Miners. After all, UTEP has had the top-rated requiring class in Conference USA for the past two years.

Of course they’re the top-rated class on paper; now is the time to start showing it on the field.

Second-year coach Scotty Walden got off to a rough start last year when the Miners began 0-6. But they started to figure things out as the season went on and finished 3-3 over the second half of the season.

Walden is hoping his team will ride that momentum into 2025 and eventually qualify for a bowl game at the end of the season.

The young coach got the city excited in 2024 with his offensive philosophy of going a mile-a-minute, running a play every 13 seconds and throwing the ball all over the field.

Sounds really good on paper, but the Miners never really got a chance to do much of that on the field because they simply didn’t have the right personnel.

To run an offense like that you must have an exceptional quarterback. Unfortunately, the Miners did not.

Returning starter Cade McConnell was demoted to second string and new starter Skyler Locklear had a disappointing season.

Locklear averaged 158 yards passing a game and threw just 10 touchdown

passes and had six interceptions.

But you must take into consideration that last year was his first year as a collegiate starter.

Then, as part of the top recruiting class in CUSA, the Miners landed the biggest recruit in the program’s history.

Quarterback Malachi Nelson signed on to play for the Miners.

Nelson isn’t just a good quarterback; he was the #1 quarterback in the nation coming out of high school two years ago.

He spent his freshman season at USC, backing up the eventual Heisman Trophy winner, Caleb Williams. Then last season he transferred to Boise State but was the second-string quarterback there.

So, this year he’s at UTEP ready to propel the Miners into CUSA championship contenders, right?

Not so fast.

The UTEP Miners have a big problem going into their season-opener against Utah State, they don’t have a quarterback.

Well, they do have a quarterback – they have two. And that’s the problem.

As of this past Sunday, coach Walden still hasn’t named a starter for the season.

Let’s be honest, when the Miners learned they were getting 2023’s highest rated high school quarterback in the country, there was no doubt he would step in and start right away.

I mean, the long-losing UTEP football program was given a gift from the football gods.

Let’s put it his way, the Miners got a guy who was heavily-recruited by Oklahoma, Alabama, Florida State, LSU, Notre Dame, Ohio State, and USC.

But the fact that Nelson hasn’t been able to dominate the quarterback position at UTEP, sends red flags throughout the program.

It appears that Locklear is a real threat to win the starting quarterback battle. And that would be a huge disappointment for what Miner fans thought they were getting.

I mean, would UTEP invest all they have to bring Nelson here just to sit him on the bench?

And is it good for the rest of the team to have to wait to find out who their leader is until just the very start of the season?

El Paso fans have spent the off-season talking about this UTEP football season and this new UTEP quarterback with great anticipation.

But as someone a lot smarter than me once said, having two quarterbacks is like having none at all.

Personally, I think the Miners can go 8-4 this year, with their only nearly guaranteed loss coming to the top-ranked Texas Longhorns in Austin.

The other 11 opponents are similar to UTEP in size and talent.

But before the Miners can get anything accomplished this season, they have to settle on one quarterback.

Everyone is excited to see Malachi Nelson, so am I, but if it isn’t him, the Miners may struggle just to win the six games necessary to go to a bowl game.

## Senior moment By Matilda Charles

# Reasons to smile

With all the negative, questionable and just plain bad news out there lately, I’ll take good news anywhere I can find it.

And one place is the website Good News Network (www.goodnewsnetwork.org). GNN, started in 1997, currently has 21,000 good news stories from around the world. Categories range from life, to gardening, to health, business and more.

There’s a free app for the phone, and if you don’t like to see ads, you can pay a yearly fee of \$15 to get rid of them. Or click the “Subscribe” button to get a free bit of good news in your email each day.

There’s even a GNN book: “And Now, The Good News: 20 Years of Inspiring News Stories,” by Geri Weis-Corbley, available on Amazon in paperback. The reviews for the book are great, saying that the short stories are real mood-lifters. I’ll be ordering it. Here’s an example: The bank that

lost 66 of its employees on 9/11 have paid to put all those employees’ kids through college. How great is that?!

Here’s another one from the book: A piece of a family farm was being sold at auction and a very young family member wanted to bid and hopefully win back the property. By common agreement, all the other 200 farmers at the auction stayed silent while the young family member was bidding. He won back the family’s farm land.

The Good News Network isn’t the only bright spot. Positive News (www.positive.news) will send a good news email once a week. The categories range from society to science to economics and more. It’s British, which makes it even more interesting.

If you’d rather look around on your own, do an online search for good news, positive world news or even good news for seniors. You’re sure to find something to smile about!

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### COMMON FEATURES

- ACROSS**
- 1 Devices for basement water removal
- 10 Moves joltingly up and down
- 17 Possesses
- 20 Repetition of a process
- 21 Faze
- 22 #1 hit for the Jackson 5
- 23 Clickers for couch potatoes
- 25 Letter before omega
- 26 Bygone Brit
- 27 Bklyn., e.g.
- 28 Neck backs
- 30 Fire remains
- 33 Food zappers
- 38 Luge, for one
- 39 “\_ your best behavior”
- 41 Starving
- 42 Really liking
- 43 Tops worn at proms
- 47 Rudolph, e.g.
- 49 “\_ changed man!”
- 50 Headlining hip-hopper
- 51 Lilylike garden staple
- 52 \_ Moines, Iowa
- 53 De Mille of dance
- 55 Irene of “Fame”
- 57 Figure skater
- Midori \_
- 59 Pointing symbol

- 60 Xbox or Switch accessory
- 68 Spiteful
- 69 Freak out in fear
- 70 Italian actress
- Sophia
- 71 Piece for two
- 72 Events to rouse candidate supporters
- 75 Start a volley
- 76 Op. \_ (kin of “ibid.”)
- 77 Dwarf planet beyond Pluto
- 78 \_ cavae (big blood vessels)
- 79 City of the White Sox, for short
- 82 Turnpike exit structures
- 85 More savage
- 89 Bro’s sib
- 91 Sweetums
- 93 Some dueling swords
- 95 Kett of the comics
- 96 “Am not!” rejoinder
- 98 Actress Chaplin
- 99 Beer grain
- 100 Floor numbers appear on them
- 104 Monetary penalties
- 105 “R.U.R.” playwright
- Capek
- 106 Like a res. of the U.S.
- 107 On the job
- 109 Every once \_ while
- 110 Theme of this puzzle
- 119 And more, in brief

- 120 Small hardware item split lengthwise
- 121 Drink with tapioca pearls
- 122 Squealer
- 123 Toppers for certain auto engine parts
- 124 Wandering pooches

### DOWN

- 1 “Park it!”
- 2 Off-roading truck, in brief
- 3 Gibson of “Mad Max”
- 4 Come before
- 5 Puts asphalt over
- 6 Elec., water or gas
- 7 Fine rain
- 8 Luau chow
- 9 Lead-in to cone
- 10 Court case hearer
- 11 Very taxing
- 12 Like lawns needing to be cut
- 13 Lead-in to con
- 14 Passe PC screen type
- 15 Lead-in night
- 16 Emmy-winning journalist Frank
- 17 Occurred
- 18 No-show
- 19 Barber’s tool
- 24 Seth Meyers’ network
- 29 Very eager
- 30 \_ Spumante
- 31 Potential target of urban renewal

- 32 Certain six-pointed polygon
- 33 \_ scale of hardness
- 34 Still having a shot to win
- 35 Hendrix hairdo
- 36 Victory signs
- 37 Book version
- 39 Big snakes
- 40 Psychic “gift”
- 44 Sketched
- 45 Indy vehicle
- 46 \_ II (Gillette razor brand)
- 48 Pt. of NBA or NCAA
- 51 Vietnamese capital
- 54 Like sexist jokes
- 56 Arrives like fog or the tide
- 58 Of time past
- 59 “Better Call Saul” channel
- 60 Practical joke
- 61 “Raggedy” doll
- 62 Sticks in the mud
- 63 Luigi’s three
- 64 Notes after dos
- 65 Like Russia, continent-wise
- 66 Morning bugle call
- 67 Enhaloed Fr. woman
- 69 Sound of falling rain
- 73 Ethereal
- 74 Animation
- 75 Feudal peasant
- 78 “Luka” singer
- Suzanne

- 79 More Impudent
- 80 Nickname for Georgia’s capital
- 81 Affect one another
- 83 Muralist Joan
- 84 Look intently
- 86 “Green” sci.
- 87 Jamaica’s Ocho \_
- 88 Anderson Cooper’s network
- 90 Retired JFK jets
- 92 Roof edge
- 93 Gets lathery
- 94 Left out
- 97 Madrid’s land, in Italian
- 101 In spite of the fact that, for short
- 102 Colorful salamanders
- 103 “\_ tu” (Verdi aria)
- 104 In a suitable manner
- 107 Truncated form of a wd.
- 108 Huge horn
- 111 “Bali \_”
- 112 Unwell
- 113 Org. for the Eagles, but not the Ravens
- 114 0.5 fl. oz.
- 115 Crude house
- 116 Plains tribe
- 117 Like nos. below zero
- 118 Carrier to Stockholm

Answer Page 4

## Super Crossword

|     |    |    |    |     |     |     |     |     |    |     |     |     |     |    |     |     |    |     |     |     |
|-----|----|----|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|-----|-----|----|-----|-----|-----|
| 1   | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5   | 6   | 7   | 8   | 9   |    | 10  | 11  | 12  | 13  | 14 | 15  | 16  |    | 17  | 18  | 19  |
| 20  |    |    |    |     |     |     |     |     |    | 21  |     |     |     |    |     |     |    | 22  |     |     |
| 23  |    |    |    |     |     |     |     |     | 24 |     |     |     |     |    |     |     |    | 25  |     |     |
|     |    |    | 26 |     |     |     |     | 27  |    |     |     |     |     |    | 28  | 29  |    |     |     |     |
| 30  | 31 | 32 |    |     |     |     | 33  | 34  |    |     |     |     | 35  | 36 | 37  |     |    |     |     |     |
| 38  |    |    |    | 39  | 40  |     |     |     |    | 41  |     |     |     |    |     | 42  |    |     |     |     |
| 43  |    |    |    | 44  |     |     |     |     | 45 | 46  |     |     | 47  |    |     | 48  |    |     |     |     |
| 49  |    |    |    | 50  |     |     |     |     |    |     |     | 51  |     |    |     |     |    | 52  |     |     |
|     | 53 |    | 54 |     |     |     |     | 55  |    | 56  |     |     |     | 57 |     | 58  |    |     |     |     |
| 59  |    |    |    |     |     | 60  | 61  | 62  |    |     |     |     | 63  | 64 |     |     |    | 65  | 66  | 67  |
| 68  |    |    |    | 69  |     |     |     |     |    |     | 70  |     |     |    |     |     | 71 |     |     |     |
| 72  |    |    |    | 73  |     |     |     |     |    | 74  |     |     |     |    |     | 75  |    |     |     |     |
|     |    |    | 76 |     |     |     |     | 77  |    |     |     |     |     |    | 78  |     |    |     |     |     |
| 79  | 80 | 81 |    | 82  |     |     | 83  | 84  |    |     | 85  |     | 86  | 87 | 88  |     |    | 89  |     | 90  |
| 91  |    |    | 92 |     |     |     |     |     | 93 |     |     |     |     |    |     |     | 94 |     |     |     |
| 95  |    |    |    |     | 96  |     |     | 97  |    |     |     | 98  |     |    |     |     | 99 |     |     |     |
| 100 |    |    |    | 101 |     |     |     |     |    | 102 | 103 |     |     |    |     | 104 |    |     |     |     |
| 105 |    |    |    |     |     |     |     | 106 |    |     |     |     |     |    | 107 | 108 |    |     |     |     |
| 109 |    |    |    | 110 | 111 | 112 | 113 |     |    |     |     | 114 | 115 |    |     |     |    | 116 | 117 | 118 |
| 119 |    |    |    | 120 |     |     |     |     |    |     |     | 121 |     |    |     |     |    |     |     |     |
| 122 |    |    |    | 123 |     |     |     |     |    |     |     | 124 |     |    |     |     |    |     |     |     |



Comix

OUT ON A LIMB By Gary Kopervas



AMBER WAVES By Dave T. Phipps



THE SPATS By Jeff Pickering



TIGER By Bud Blake



Lowry

From Page 2

pay the salaries of its fighters, though it is still able to recruit teenage boys for missions like keeping lookout or placing explosives along Israeli military routes.”

Making it harder for your enemy to pay its fighters and secure new ones is an important and legitimate military goal. The problem is the potential cost to people in Gaza who aren’t combatants.

The shortages are just another consequence of how deeply embedded Hamas is in Gaza society. This isn’t a group of terrorists who moved into territory adjacent to Israel to launch the Oct. 7 attacks and could be quickly extricated by an intense military operation. Hamas has been the government of Gaza for a couple of decades, and has used every instrument of political and social influence at its disposal – including the distribution of food – to build its military capacity.

It’s important to remember that Israel didn’t start this war, that it’d much rather be fighting a conventional military force that abided by

the rules of war, and that Hamas still holds Israeli hostages and has taken a rejectionist attitude to ceasefire talks.

Even Emperor Hirohito thought his people had suffered enough at the conclusion of World War II, but Hamas considers the agony of Gazans a useful weapon in the narrative war. From this perverted point of view, a famine would be welcome news, perhaps forcing Israel to stay its hand and leave Hamas to fight another day.

Clearly, Israel needs to find better ways to get aid into Gaza. The GHF hasn’t gotten the support that it needed from the U.N. and other agencies (they are too invested in the corrupt status quo), while the distribution points for aid are chaotic and dangerous.

The best thing that could happen would be an end to the war with a decent political authority – more invested in the general welfare than in tunnels and rockets– finally in charge of Gaza. But Hamas would rather see the population starve than give up on the war, or its grip on power.

Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review. ©2025 by King Features Synd., Inc.

Gallstones are problematic, but treatments are available

DEAR DR. ROACH: What advice do you have for the treatment of gallstones? – N.W.

Gallstones are common (6% of men and 9% of women will get one over a lifetime) and are mostly composed of bile salts and cholesterol. The goal of treatment is to reduce symptoms and the risk of complications. Depending on the size and composition of a person’s gallstones, there are different therapies available.



The most common treatment for symptomatic gallstones is surgery. Surgery is highly effective, although there are complications such as bleeding, infection and leaks. About 10% of people will develop diarrhea after surgery, which tends to get better over weeks to months but sometimes requires treatment with a bile-acid-binding drug like cholestyramine. Surgery is performed laparoscopically, which means faster healing times.

For people who are not good candidates for surgery (such as those with significant medical illnesses) or people who do not want surgery, there are other options. Medications given by mouth, such as ursodiol (Actigall), can dissolve gallstones, but this can take a long time, usually several years. People with smaller stones that are mostly made of cholesterol can be good candidates for this treatment. However, it is not 100% effective.

Another option is a tube placed into the gallbladder through the abdominal wall to drain bile, which is also sometimes done to remove stones, but I have seldom seen it done. Similarly, shock-wave treatment, which is commonly used for kidney stones, is rarely used but can be a reasonable option in people with only one or two stones.

DEAR DR. ROACH: I am a soon-to-be 84-year-old woman with a question about excessive hair shedding. I’ve always had very thick, good hair, and in fact, I get a lot of compliments on my beautiful hair. I get my hair cut every four to five weeks, and my hairdresser always thins my hair at each visit. On my last visit, she asked me if I had been ill. While my hair was not coming out in clumps, she said it was shedding more than she has ever seen before with my hair. I, too, have noticed during the past month that there is more hair on my brush, shower drain and clothes. With my hair being so thick, I’ve always had some shedding that appears on my clothes, but nothing to this extent. I’m not on any new medicines. What could be causing my hair to shed so much? This is the last thing I thought I would be a problem for me. Is it something serious? Can it be treated and reversed? I hate to think that I am about to lose the only good asset I have. – J.M.W.

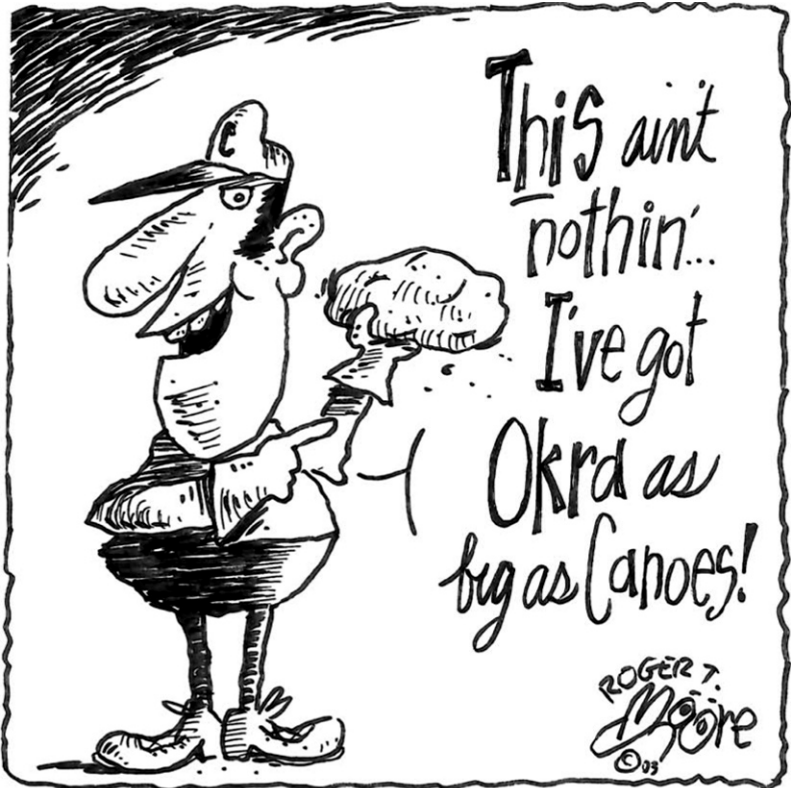
The most common cause of hair loss I see in older women is female pattern hair loss, but your story sounds more like acute telogen effluvium, which means the loss of hair during the resting phase. This condition is sometimes but not always associated with a stressful event. There are other medical causes, but in a third of cases, no underlying cause can be identified.

The good news about telogen effluvium is that the hair usually comes back, often around 6-12 months. However, I know how important hair can be to both men and women, so I always recommend a visit with a dermatologist, especially one who has expertise in hair disorders as they have additional tools to evaluate patients for other causes.

Dr. Roach regrets that he is unable to answer individual questions, but will incorporate them in the column whenever possible. Readers may email questions to [ToYourGoodHealth@med.cornell.edu](mailto:ToYourGoodHealth@med.cornell.edu). ©2025 North America Synd., Inc. All Rights Reserved.

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**Moore Texas by Roger MOORE**  
1975: Herb Vinson of Colean grew a 10 lb. 2 oz. sweet potato.

CryptoQuip

This is a simple substitution cipher in which each letter used stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Solution is accomplished by trial and error.

Clue: X equals Y

MQKM XCTUO OTX VCZYD MC  
PJYDD JYKVVX DNKJMVX, DC  
H MCVP QHN, "XCT'ZY AYYU  
K ZYJX UKMMX ACX!"

Answer Page 4

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Weekly SUDOKU

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

Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦♦♦

♦ Moderate ♦♦ Challenging

Answer Page 4

♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

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The Dole Act: Benefits and improvements



by Freddy Groves

Have you wondered what exactly is included in the Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act? There's one way to find out: Scroll through it. There's more to the Act than you might imagine, and all of it is to benefit you.

Sec. 301 calls for burial benefits for veterans who were under hospice care at the time of their death. It concerns those veterans who pass away between July 1, 2025, and Oct. 1, 2026 and who are receiving VA medical or nursing care before receiving hospice care – they will receive full VA burial allowance. That was not the case before, if a veteran went from VA medical care to home. To read all the details about VA burial benefits, see [www.](http://www.va.gov/burials-memorials)

[va.gov/burials-memorials](http://www.va.gov/burials-memorials). Should you also wish to apply for pre-need eligibility to make it easier for family when the time comes, there is info on that page as well.

Sec. 143 addresses the reimbursement of ambulance cost for veterans in rural areas. This might be by ambulance or air ambulance, to the nearest hospital that can meet the needs of the veteran. Be sure of the details on this one if you might use this service. Read the definitions in the text because coverage varies by disability rating, distance to hospital and so on. This benefit is likely to change after September 30, 2026, and is worth paying attention to because the total accumulative benefit is \$46,000 of coverage.

Sec. 208 concerns the payment of full monthly housing stipend for those who are in their final semester of education assistance under the Post-911/Educational Assistance Program. Read the details if

this applies to you. And in a topic that's near and dear to the hearts of many of us, Sec. 304 ensures that only licensed health care professionals do the medical disability exams.

To get the most out of the 97 pages of the Act, start at the top and scroll through the Table of Contents ([www.congress.gov/118/plaws/pub1210/PLAW-118pub1210.pdf](http://www.congress.gov/118/plaws/pub1210/PLAW-118pub1210.pdf)).

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- Stuck zippers can be loosened with graphite powder or simply by tracing a pencil lead over the zipper.
- Memorabilia? Use a reasonably sized plastic storage bin for each child. Include folders noting each school grade for art and academic papers. It can be a special collection that you can give to your child when he is an adult.

• According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, "each 12-ounce soft drink contains approximately 10 teaspoons of sugar and 150 calories. Drinking just one can of soda a day increases a child's risk of obesity by 60%." Talk to your children about smart choices both in the lunch line and at the vending machines.

• Got a child going off to college? Before you leave campus, go together to the health center, and make sure your kid knows who to call/ where to go for emergency or urgent care, both on campus and off. Not knowing can sometimes cause a delay in getting care, turning a bad situation worse.

• Returning to school can mean returning to sports after a summer hiatus. Be smart, and follow these guidelines from the American Academy of Pediatrics: Give yourself at least one recovery day off each week; be sure you are wearing the proper gear and that it's properly fitted; don't forget to cross-train (general exercises to strengthen your muscles and keep you flexible); take breaks and hydrate to avoid overheating; and have your coach reinforce the proper technique and safety rules.

Send your tips to Now Here's a Tip, 628 Virginia Drive, Orlando, FL 32803. ©2025 King Features Synd., Inc.

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.

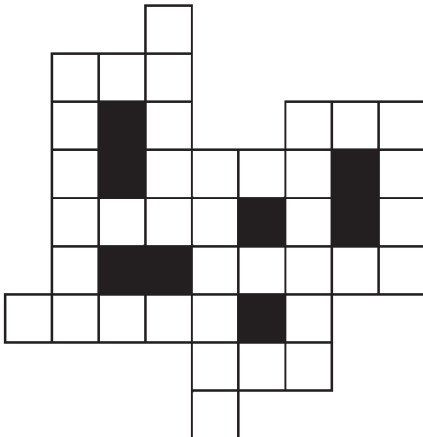
Answer Page 4

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|   |   |   |   |   |      |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|------|---|---|---|
|   | + |   | - |   | = 6  |   |   |   |
| - |   | + |   | + |      |   |   |   |
|   | + |   | ÷ |   | = 6  |   |   |   |
| - |   | - |   | ÷ |      |   |   |   |
|   | + |   | ÷ |   | = 10 |   |   |   |
| = |   | = |   | = |      |   |   |   |
| 1 |   | 8 |   | 9 |      |   |   |   |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6    | 7 | 8 | 9 |



RSI  
ERVRI  
D  
ERGMI  
UEML  
♥LACERL  
UOD  
AVLI  
EVDLE  
MCA  
DOSTLE  
OGCAN  
♥REGO



Answer Page 4

Unscramble these twelve letter strings to form each into an ordinary word (ex. HAGNEC becomes CHANGE). Prepare to use only ONE word from any marked (♥) letter string as each unscrambles into more than one word (ex. ♥RATHE becomes HATER or EARTH or HEART). Fit each string's word either across or down to knot all twelve strings together.

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