

## NEWSBRIEFS

### College help for Clint ISD seniors

El Paso Community College (EPCC) is participating with Clint Independent School District (CISD) and the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) to assist seniors in registering as part of the Operation College Bound Initiative. 2019 CISD Seniors can meet with EPCC and UTEP recruitment representatives as part of Operation College Bound. The event is scheduled for Monday, March 25 from 9:00 to 10:30 a.m. at Horizon High School (14651 Horizon Blvd.).

— Ismael De La Rosa

### Health fair

The Tornillo Independent School District has joined in collaboration with the University of Texas at El Paso Allied Health Science to host a Community Health and Wellness Fair. The event will run from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on Saturday, April 27, 2019 at Tornillo High School at 430-D Oil Mill Road in Tornillo.

— Linda Rivero

### Innovative states

With the U.S. projected to spend \$581 billion on research and development in 2019 and NYC recently backing out of the deal for Amazon's HQ2, the personal-finance website WalletHub today released its report on 2019's *Most & Least Innovative States* as well as accompanying videos. In order to give credit to the states that have contributed the most to America's innovative success, WalletHub compared the 50 states and the District of Columbia across 24 key metrics. The data set ranges from share of STEM professionals to R&D spending per capita. Texas placed 15th in this study, ranking:

- 18th — Share of STEM Professionals;
  - 14th — Projected STEM-Job Demand by 2020;
  - 27th — Eighth-Grade Math & Science Performance;
  - 25th — Share of Science & Engineering Graduates Aged 25+;
  - 14th — Share of Technology Companies;
  - 31st — R&D Spending per Capita; and
  - 17th — Venture Capital Funding per Capita.
- Other stats:
- The District of Columbia has the

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*Faith gives us the courage to face the present with confidence, and the future with hope.*

— Quips & Quotes



— Photo courtesy of Fabens Middle School

**HITTING THE RIGHT NOTES** — Fabens Middle School (FMS) band students — 41 of them above — participated in the recent Association of Texas Small School Bands (ATSSB) All-Region band performance. FMS band program is under the direction of Jose L. Del Rio, Jr. (right foreground).

## Fabens MS excels in State band competition

By Alfredo Vasquez  
*Special to the Courier*

FABENS — Fabens Middle School (FMS) band program made a strong showing recently at the Association of Texas Small School Bands (ATSSB) All-Region band competition that was held at Clint High School. Of the 90 FMS band students who auditioned for a position in the all-region band, 41 of them advanced.

“The ATSSB All-Region band was made up of 64 MS band students in which 41 of them were from FMS,” reported Jose L. Del Rio, Jr., the FMS band director since 2013. The other band students on the all-region band came from middle schools including Garcia Enriquez MS, Clint MS, Anthony MS, East Montana MS and Radford Private School.

ATSSB, created in 1991, is a musical organization dedicated to promote the interests of small school bands in the state of Texas, according to Del Rio. “The focus of ATSSB is on serving the needs of small school band students, directors, parents, and administrators,” he explained.

“Every year, ATSSB in every region of Texas hosts these competitions in

order to motivate students through music performance,” Del Rio stated. “The students who passed the audition process earned the position to perform in the ATSSB All-Region band concert, which was held January 26,” he related.

“This competition also prepares middle school students who continue into high school band. High school band students who make the All-Region band also have the opportunity to continue on by auditioning at the regional and state level,” Del Rio stated.

FMS's band students who performed in the all-region band were: Ariana Banez, Alinna Hernandez-Garcia, Itzel Hernandez, Mariana Martinez, Brianna Camacho, Melanie Munoz, Stephanie Soto, Paloma Herrera, Aracely Ramirez, Lorenzo Portillo, Adriana Castro, Ismael Chuca Camacho, Jonathan Flores, Dyanayel Quintana, Emely Martinez, Dominique Perez, Juan Angel Ochoa, Lauren Gutierrez, Omar De Diego, Jared Maldonado, Sophia Livas, Carlos Valdez Salcido, Kaitlyn Dettman, Jaqueline Sandoval, Aaron Orozco, Alicia Rooks, Adrian Rangel Ochoa, Isabel Rodriguez Porras, Julian Iglesias, Jalen Rosas, Angel Santillana-Navarro, Frank Sierra, Saul Gonzalez Morales, Clarissa Villalobos, Sugey Rios, Briana Tarango,

Lilia Balderrama, Johnny Barraza, Ever Reyes Lopez, Ian Gomez, Aliyah Sanchez, and Libni Garcia.

“Music is an important part of my life and I take pride in instilling the love and understanding of music to my students. I started Fabens MS with only 78 students made up of a beginning band and 1 concert band. I now have 220 students by myself and direct 5 bands; beginning band, concert band, symphonic band, honor band and a jazz band,” the FMS band director commented.

“Mr. Del Rio has been ‘instrumental’ in developing the band program... during his six-year tenure at FMS. He has been diligent in his desire to design and implement a program that strives daily to afford students opportunities to excel. His demeanor compliments his efforts such that students feel comfortable and challenged to do their best. To date, he has expanded efforts to include 5 bands: Beginning Band (88 students), Concert Band (26 students), Symphonic Band (31 students), Honor Band (50 Students) and Jazz Band (18 students), stated Dr. Joe Keith, FMS principal. “Mr. Del Rio was voted as our Campus Teacher of the Year and District Secondary Teacher of the Year during the 2014 - 2015 school year,” he added.



View from here By Marilyn M. Singleton, M.D., J.D.

# Thought police – oops, Medicare – for all

The new Medicare for All bill (H.R. 1384) has come and hopefully will go the way of the pet rock. Everybody now knows the basics: the government will take care of all medical, dental, vision, pharmacy, and long-term care services with no out-of-pocket expenses. The bill prohibits parallel private insurance, and has the glaring absence of a financing mechanism.

But as usual, bills contain hidden gems. Section 104 of the bill tracks the Affordable Care Act’s “anti-discrimination” rule, making it clear that no person can be denied benefits, specifically including abortion and treatment of gender identity issues “by any participating provider.” The bill does not correspondingly reaffirm the federal laws protecting conscience and First Amendment religious freedom rights of medical personnel. Such protections relate to participation in abortion, sterilization, assisted suicide, and other ethical dilemmas.

Most sane individuals agree that we do not want our government to control any aspect of our individual lives – particularly not our religious beliefs and moral codes. When the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) sought to clarify such conscience protections, thousands of commenters offered evidence of discrimination and coercion to violate the tenets of the Oath of Hippocrates and their own ethics. Some left their jobs or left the

medical profession entirely when their conscientious objections were not honored.

Conscience protections are vital in this time of unabashed devaluing of life. Last year, the Palliative Care and Hospice Education Training Act (PCHETA), passed the House but died in the Senate. This bill would have dedicated \$100 million in additional taxpayer dollars to persuade patients to forgo treatment that might prolong life in exchange for a steady stream of increasing doses of narcotics. Already some families feel they are not merely offered hospice as a choice but are steered toward it when their older relatives fall ill, even when the medical prognosis is uncertain.

The focus on palliative care and lowering costs by reducing “aggressive” end-of-life treatment is one more incremental under-the-radar step along the road to government control over life and death. A culture of hastening death has gradually evolved, disguised as “death with dignity.” California, Colorado, Oregon, Washington, Montana, Vermont have legalized physician-assisted suicide with 20 other states considering implementing such laws.

Subtly devaluing life primes the pump for rationing of medical care at all stages by a government-run program that is the exclusive purveyor of medical “benefits.” Our

western counterparts with single payer have discovered that offering fewer benefits is the simplest way to control costs. The “Complete Lives System” – the brainchild of ObamaCare physician architect Ezekiel Emanuel – includes worrisome determinants of who should receive care. The system prioritizes adolescents and persons with “instrumental value,” i.e., individuals with “future usefulness.”

This year, legislators were not so subtle. It is bad enough that our elderly are pushed into hospice,

but now the compassionate legislators have set their sights on newborns. New York passed, and Virginia floated laws that permit the killing of babies after birth. The U.S. Senate garnered only 53 of the 60 votes needed to pass the Born Alive Survivors Protection Act which would mandate medical care and legal protections to infants born alive after an attempted abortion.

Starting in the 1970s, the federal government clearly saw a need to protect medical personnel from the tyranny of the government mandates that

could violate religious or moral convictions. Personal liberty is an integral part of our democratic republic. While a physician’s calling is to render treatment to all patients, this is balanced with an individual physician’s moral beliefs. This is no more apparent than in legislation permitting physician assisted suicide and post-delivery “abortions.” Sadly, under threat of discrimination lawsuits, some physicians have acquiesced to patients’ requests for medications and surgical

See MEDICARE FOR ALL, Page 5

Food for thought By Diana Polk

# Taxes provoke strong feelings

As Americans file their taxes this year, they have to contend with all the changes from the recent tax reform. But aside from filing frustrations, taxpayers have another reason to be discontent: 9 in 10 voting-age Americans (224 million people) do not believe the government is currently spending their tax dollars wisely, according to survey from the personal-finance website WalletHub.

“It’s common that people think a lot of government spending is wasted; this is standard over time too,” said William G. Gale, the Arjay and Frances Fearing Miller Chair in Federal Economic Policy at The Brookings Institution. “However, when asked whether individual programs should be cut, most people say no.” According to Gale, Americans also overestimate how much of their taxes go to categories like foreign aid, which makes up less than one percent of the federal budget.

Even if they are at time misinformed on how their taxes are spent, Americans do have clear preferences about where they’d like that money to go. For example, 75 percent of survey respondents said they’d rather pay for healthcare than a border wall. This is significant in light of the recent partial government shutdown (the longest in history), which was sparked by President Trump’s call for border wall funding and congressional Democrats’ opposition.

“It’s really important that voters express their position through their votes,” said Eric A. Lustig, director of the Center for Business Law at New England Law. “The tax system has never been about paying for what you want and not paying for what you don’t want. That’s a job for the Congress and President. In an early tax case, Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes said that ‘taxes

are what we pay for a civilized society.’ In fact, these words are chiseled on the exterior of IRS headquarters in Washington.”

Individuals can play a part in determining their tax rates by electing like-minded representatives. The 2020 elections are the next big opportunity to do so, and more than 50 percent of Americans say healthcare will be the biggest issue for them when voting, according to the survey. This “could bode well for Democrats,” said Paul Weinstein Jr., director of the public management master’s program at Johns Hopkins University, “if they focus on cost – which is the biggest concern for most Americans – and if the party does not overpromise on coverage.”

The tax tables and how taxes are spent will surely change in the future as the government’s political makeup transforms. For now, though, Americans must focus on filing correctly in 2019 – an exhausting process for many people. According to the survey, nearly 50 percent of people would rather serve jury duty than file their taxes.

“Being on jury duty can be interesting and get you a few days off work,” said Michael Ettlinger, director of the Carsey School of Public Policy at the University of New Hampshire. “You feel you are performing a useful service to your community. Dealing with tax filing is complicated and the consequences of doing it wrong can be substantial – which makes it stressful.”

Whatever your views on taxes and how they are spent, it’s crucial to file on time, even if you can’t pay. In some situations, it may even be a good idea to pay with a credit card. And if you want to have an effect on how your tax dollars are used, it’s important to vote for representatives you feel will reflect your views.

## Survey says

With Tax Day looming and Americans still figuring out the new tax code, WalletHub has released its 2019 Taxpayer Survey as well as its yearly Tax Rates by State report and accompanying videos in order to help people better understand this confusing time of year. You can find highlights from both below, followed by the full list of WalletHub’s 2019 Taxpayer Resources. Texas was 41st ( 34th when adjusted for cost of living) in Overall Effective State & Local Tax Rate, ranking (1 best):

- 1st – Income Tax;
- 46th – Real-Estate Tax;
- 1st – Vehicle Property Tax; and
- 48th – Sales & Excise Taxes.

### 2019 Taxpayer Survey:

- Fewer than 4 in 10 people are happy with President Trump’s tax reforms. 70% think they benefit the rich more than the middle class.
- 89% of people think the government currently does not spend their tax dollars wisely.
- 31% of people say making a math mistake is their biggest Tax Day fear, edging out not having enough money (28%) at the top of the list.
- 36% of people would move to a different country for a tax-free future. 24% would get an “IRS” tattoo and 15% would take a vow of celibacy.

### 2019 Taxpayer Resources:

- What To Do If You Can’t Pay;
- Pros & Cons Of Paying With Credit;
- Tax Scams & Tips for Avoiding Them;
- Last-Minute Tax Tips; and
- Property Taxes by State.

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# Yes, there is a crisis at the border

We interrupt the talk of the president “manufacturing” a crisis at the border with this hair-raising report about the crisis at the border.

Alarming new numbers about border apprehensions from U.S. Customs and Border Protection should puncture the lazy conventional wisdom about the border being under control, except in the lurid imagination of President Donald Trump.

More than 76,000 migrants were apprehended crossing the southern border last month, the highest February in more than 10 years and the highest month of the Trump administration. The number of apprehensions tops any month during the 2014 border surge under President Barack Obama, which no one had a problem calling a crisis at the time.

Yes, there were more overall apprehensions in the 2000s. But it was a different population, made up overwhelmingly of adult males from Mexico who might be apprehended trying to cross multiple times and were reliably returned home when they were caught. Now, we are apprehending people but not returning them.

Migrants are coming in greater numbers from Central American

countries instead of Mexico, and are primarily families and children. In an astonishing shift, in 2012, 10 percent of apprehended migrants were families and children; in recent months, it’s been 61 percent.

The rules for dealing with migrants from noncontiguous countries and with family units make it all but impossible to swiftly return or detain them, not to mention that our physical facilities were built with single adults in mind.

There is no mechanism to return these migrants home, to hold them after they cross the border, or to remove them once they are in the interior. And word has gotten out. There’s a reason that the subset of migrants that we can’t stop from getting into the country is growing so rapidly.

Needless to say, a spiraling border crisis is maddening for a president committed to controlling the border, which is why we’ve seen such frenetic activity from Trump. His rhetoric may be over the top, but the impulse to get a handle on this is absolutely correct.

First, there’s the question of basic sovereignty. If we are going to welcome a large number of migrants from three or four foreign countries, we

should make that decision as a conscious policy, rather than slip-sliding into it unawares.

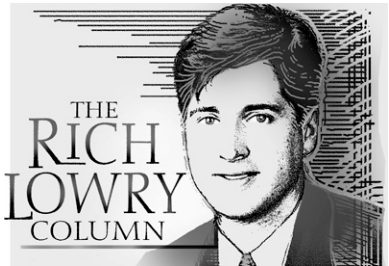
Then there’s the matter of assimilation and legality. Poorly educated immigrants, like the ones coming from Central America, have the hardest time assimilating, and they will lack legal status on top of it.

Finally, there’s the humanitarian question. Migrant families show up needing medical attention that we aren’t well-prepared to

provide. We’d be much better positioned to tend to the migrants under our care if the numbers weren’t overwhelming.

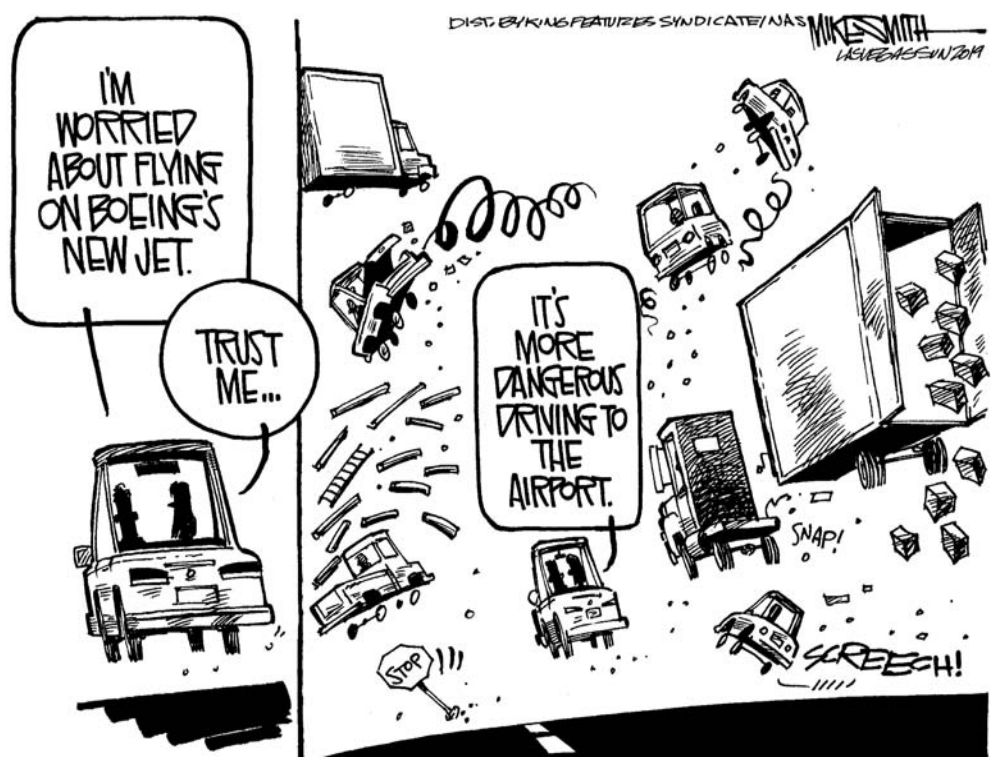
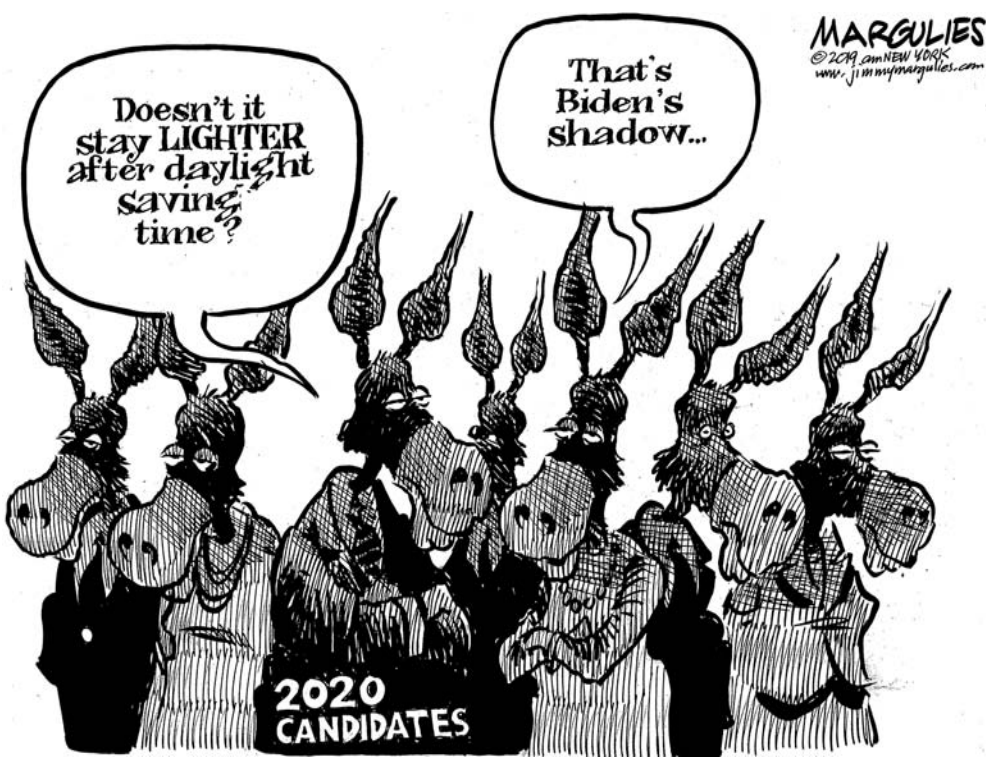
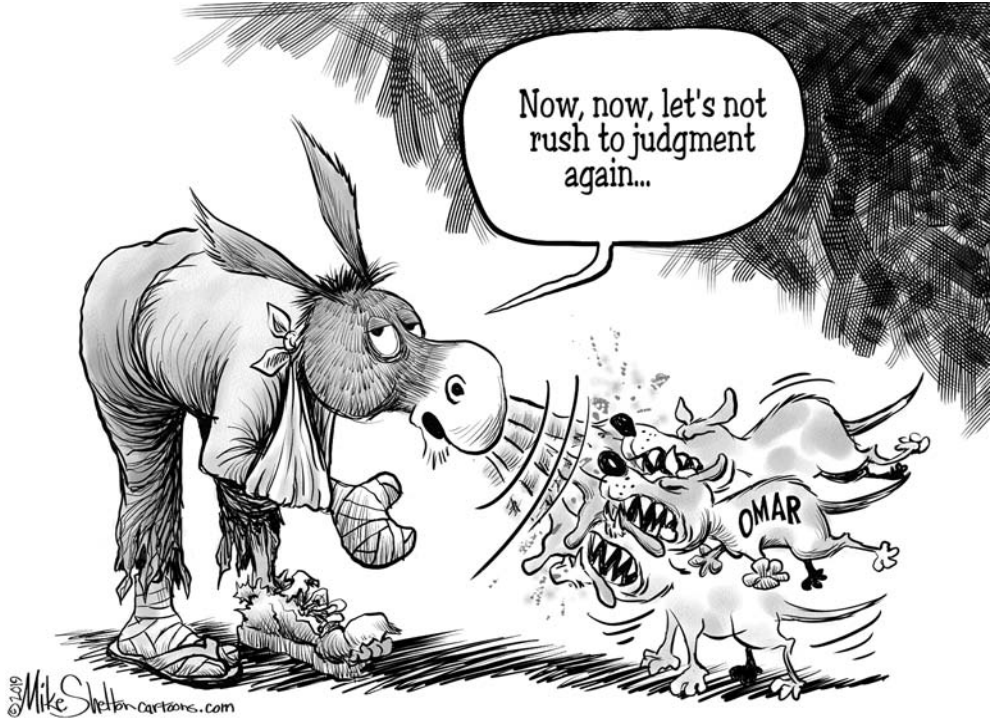
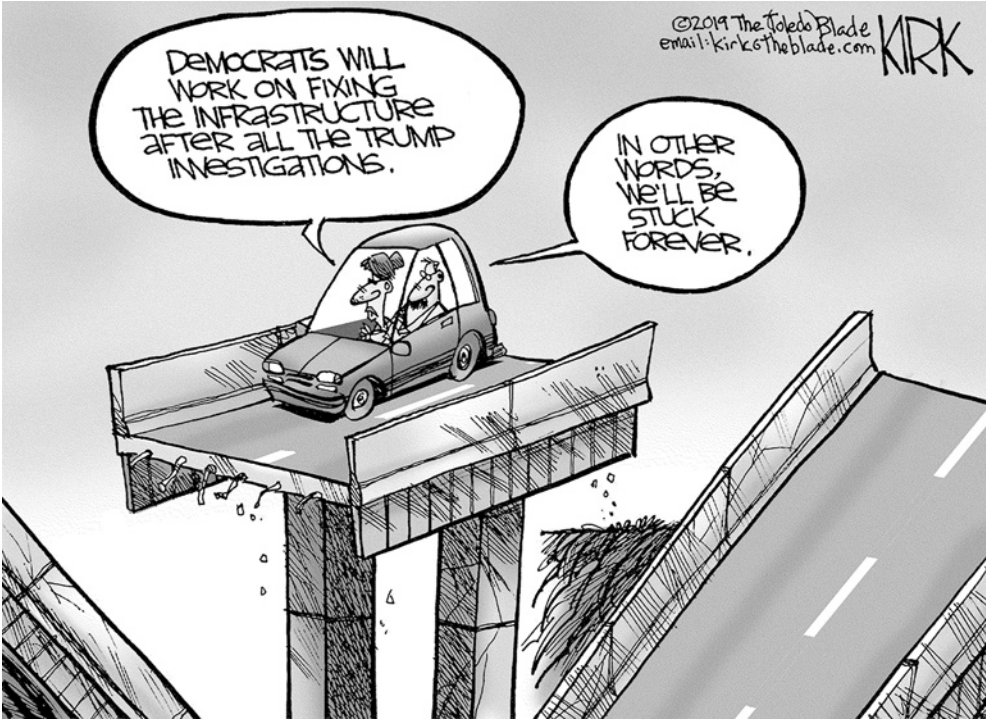
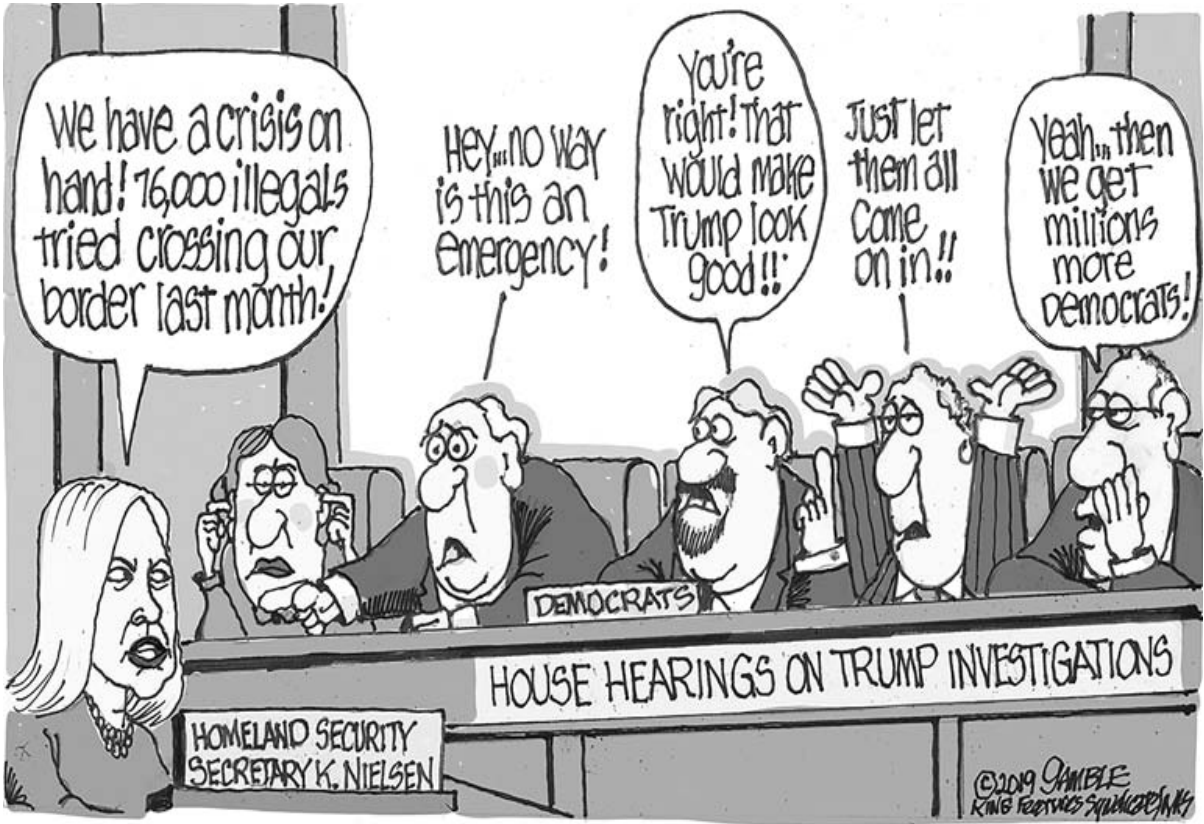
But we are at a stalemate. *The New York Times* editorialized the other day that Trump declared “that there’s a crisis at the border, contrary to all evidence.” Then, the paper ran a news story headlined, “Border at ‘Breaking Point’ as More than 76,000 Migrants Cross in a Month.”

Both of those pieces can’t be



right. There’s manufacturing a crisis, then there’s ignoring one for fear of conceding anything to Trump.

Rich Lowry is editor of the *National Review*. (c) 2019 by King Features Synd., Inc.





# Texas teacher, support staff pay slipping behind national average

By Clay Robison  
Special to the Courier

TEXAS – Even as the Legislature debates state education funding, the average teachers salary in Texas is dropping even farther behind the national average, updated research by the National Education Association (NEA) shows.

Average teacher pay in Texas for the current, 2018-19 school year is \$54,122, according to the Texas Education Agency, or \$54,155, based on NEA’s calculations. Either figure is about \$7,600 less than the national

average of \$61,782, as estimated by NEA, which does an annual state-by-state survey of teacher salaries and other education spending categories. Texas ranked 27th among the states and the District of Columbia in teacher compensation.

The Texas State Teachers Association is the Texas affiliate of NEA, the 3-million-member educators’ union.

Texas’ average teacher salary of \$53,334 for the 2017-18 school year trailed the national average of \$60,462 by about \$7,100. Adjusted for inflation, average teacher pay in Texas in 2017-18 was 2.9 percent less than it was

in 2008-09, NEA said.

“This is disgraceful, and it is getting worse,” said TSTA President Noel Candelaria. “Inadequate pay is a major reason why thousands of effective teachers leave Texas classrooms every year for other professions. It also is why almost 40 percent of teachers who stick it out have to take extra jobs during the school year to meet their families’ needs.”

“And it is why TSTA is demanding that the Legislature, as it tackles school finance reform this session, enact a permanent, across-the-board pay raise for every teacher and provide funding for pay raises for librarians, counselors, nurses and all support staff as well,” Candelaria added.

“The #RedForEd movement rallied at the state Capitol earlier this week, and it will continue to expand throughout Texas until lawmakers do what is right for all our students, educators and retired educators.”

Support staff, who provide invaluable services to students and teachers every day, are paid less than teachers, much less in many cases. According to the Texas Education Agency, here

are current average salaries for various support staff: classroom aides – \$21,153; food service workers – \$19,162; bus drivers – \$24,304; custodians – \$24,662; campus clerical staff – \$26,967; and campus security – \$32,992.

“When you subtract their ever-increasing costs for health insurance, many of these employees are taking home very little money each month,” Candelaria said. “They also have to take outside jobs, often more than one, to support their families. The Legislature must pay all school employees more, and it must increase the \$75 per month it contributes to teacher and school employee health insurance. That amount hasn’t been increased in 17 years, while health care costs have soared.”

In an earlier report, NEA had estimated the average teacher salary in Texas for 2017-18 at \$53,167, compared to an estimated national average of \$60,483. This new report updates those figures.

Clay Robison is the Public Information Officer for the Texas State Teachers Association.



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By Samantha Weaver

- It was Isaac Asimov, professor of biochemistry and beloved Grand Master of science fiction, who made the following sage observation: “There is a cult of ignorance in the United States, and there always has been. The strain of anti-intellectualism has been a constant thread winding its way through our political and cultural life, nurtured by the false notion that democracy means that ‘my ignorance is just as good as your knowledge.’”
- According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, if you’re like the average American, you drink 22.7 gallons of coffee every year. The surprising thing about that statistic isn’t how much it is, though – it’s how little. It seems that in the 1940s, Americans were drinking twice that amount of java.
- You might be surprised to learn that gravity makes you shorter. It’s true; gravity compresses your spine – in a weightless environment, you would be 2 to 3 inches taller than you are here on Earth.

- George W. Church, the founder of Church’s Fried Chicken, didn’t actually enter the restaurant business until after he retired. In his first career, Church ran a chicken hatchery and sold incubators.
- Those who study such things say that 1 percent of the world’s lizard species have no males. The females reproduce by parthenogenesis, which produces offspring that are clones of their mothers.
- Before Charlton Heston became a famous actor, he earned cash by serving as an artists’ model – and posed in the nude.

Thought for the Day: “Mistakes are a part of being human. Appreciate your mistakes for what they are: precious life lessons that can only be learned the hard way. Unless it’s a fatal mistake, which, at least, others can learn from.”

– Al Franken

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## CryptoQuip Answer

While the movie might have further subsequent versions, this will be the first among sequels.

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# Moments in time

THE HISTORY CHANNEL

- On March 18, 1937, nearly 300 students in Texas are killed by an explosion of natural gas at their school. Officials at the New London school had been persuaded to save money by tapping into less stable wet-gas lines that ran nearby. The blast was felt 40 miles away.
- On March 19, 1842, French writer Honore de Balzac’s play “Les Ressources de Quinola” opens to an empty house. Hoping to create a buzz for the play, Balzac had circulated a rumor that tickets were sold out. Unfortunately, most of his fans stayed home.
- On March 20, 1345, according to scholars at the University of Paris, the Black Death plague is created from what they call “a triple conjunction of Saturn, Jupiter and Mars in the 40th degree of Aquarius.” The Black Death left an estimated 25 million dead. It’s now known that bubonic plague is carried by fleas.
- On March 21, 1952, the first rock and roll concert in history is held in Cleveland, hosted by legendary disk jockey Alan Freed. Police were overwhelmed when an estimated 20,000-25,000 fans swarmed the Moondog Coronation Ball, held in an arena with a capacity of only 10,000.
- On March 22, 1983, the Pentagon awards a contract worth more than \$1 billion to AM General Corp. to produce 55,000 High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicles. Nicknamed the Humvee, the rugged vehicles were used by the U.S. military. In 1992, a civilian version, the Hummer, went on sale.
- On March 23, 1994, Wayne Gretzky scores his 802nd goal, breaking his childhood idol Gordie Howe’s NHL record for most goals in a career.
- On March 24, 1965, the first “teach-in” is conducted at the University of Michigan as 200 faculty members hold special anti-war seminars. This form of protest spread to many colleges and universities.

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# Briefs

From Page 1

- highest share of STEM professionals, 9.8 percent, three times higher than Mississippi, the lowest at 3.3 percent.
- The District of Columbia has the highest share of technology companies, 8.4 percent, 3.2 times higher than South Dakota, the lowest at 2.60 percent
- New Mexico has the highest research and development (R&D) intensity, 6.52 percent, 16.3 times higher than Nevada, the lowest at 0.4 percent.
- Florida has the highest share of public high-school students taking advanced-placement (AP) exams, 51.91 percent, 3.9 times higher than in North Dakota, the lowest at 13.22 percent.

– Diana Polk

# Doorbell saves the day

You never know what those new-fangled doorbell cameras will capture. It could be a potential burglar or it might be an epic lightning strike that set a neighbor’s house on fire. It happened in Fort Bend County, TX and a good thing it was, too, because the residents of the home with the video doorbell were able to alert their neighbors to the fire so no one was injured.

– John Grimaldi

# Medicare for all

From Page 2

procedures that conflict with their moral code.

As anthropologist, Margaret Mead so brilliantly wrote, “One profession, the followers of [Hippocrates], were to be dedicated completely to life under all circumstances... This is a priceless possession which we cannot afford to tarnish, but society always is attempting to make the physician into a killer – to kill the defective child at birth, to leave the sleeping pills beside the bed of the cancer patient.... It is the duty of society to protect the physician from such requests.”

We must not let the government bury our conscience and beliefs under layers of bureaucracy. Medicare for All may mean independent thought for none.

Marilyn M. Singleton is a board-certified anesthesiologist. She attended UC Berkeley Law School, focusing on constitutional law and administrative law. She teaches classes in the recognition of elder abuse and constitutional law for non-lawyers. She lives in Oakland, Ca.

# True Texas Facts

by Roger T. Moore

June 4, 1909 - Lone Star Gas Co. files a charter to become the first gas distributor in Texas.





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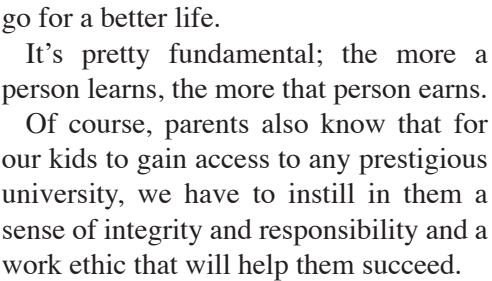
[wtxcc@wtxcc.com](mailto:wtxcc@wtxcc.com)



**By Steve Escajeda**  
*Special to the Courier*

The hope is that their kids make more money, do more good, and eventually reach a state of fulfillment they could never imagine.

And in this day and age, it starts with an education. Parents know, maybe not in every instance, but for the most part, the higher the education – the higher the odds



What's mind-boggling is how in the world he kept this charade going for so many years – unless everyone close to the situation had his or her hand out.

Singer also knew where tons of money flowed freely at most big universities – athletics,

And like most intelligent crooks, Singer went where the money was.

Heck, in some cases his students' heads were Photo-shopped on to more athletic bodies. In others, their basic stats would be manipulated.

These were in sports like tennis and swimming and water polo; sports that don't have the notoriety that football and basketball do. So it's easier to fly under the radar.

Of course Singer couldn't do all this on his own, so he used the services of a man called Mark Riddell, who was an ex-tennis pro, and the director of college entrance exam preparation at a boarding school in Florida.

According to the FBI, Riddell would fly in, take the test for students in a hotel room, or sneak them the correct answers in the exam room, or inflate their scores when they finished. Sometimes he would be given a sample of the teen's handwriting so he could copy it.

So in a nutshell, Singer would take money from wealthy parents, pay his buddy Riddell to fix test scores, bribe willing employees and coaches at universities, and their spoiled wealthy kids would take college spots from other qualified students.

I guess the adage is true – money can buy you happiness.

For these people it appears that money may also bought them peace... and serenity.... and time... in prison.

# Super Crossword

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		9	10	11	12		13	14	15	16	17	18	19
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23									24				25							
26							27	28				29								
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41	42	43					44						45							
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	58				59				60	61				62						
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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	125				
126								127					128							
129								130					131							



Comix

OUT ON A LIMB By Gary Kopervas



AMBER WAVES By Dave T. Phipps



THE SPATS By Jeff Pickering



R.F.D. By Mike Marland



# Stomach ‘flu’ is not actually flu

DEAR DR. ROACH: With the flu season coming on, would you please discuss the difference between what people call the “stomach flu” and what the flu really is? I have two friends who said they weren’t getting the flu shot anymore because despite having it, they got the flu. They each described several hours of throwing up, but feeling better the next day. I suggested that they probably had a gastrointestinal episode and not influenza, which is a respiratory disease. They insisted that they had the flu, and they’d always learned that the stomach flu is influenza and the flu shot is meant to prevent it. Since then I’ve spoken to two others who believe the same thing. – G.C.



You are right that there is much confusion about what influenza is. Influenza typically begins with sudden onset of fever, headache, fatigue and severe body and muscle aches. Influenza occurs about two days after exposure. There also often are symptoms of cough, sore throat and nasal discharge, just as there are with the common cold, but the sudden onset, fever (commonly 100 to 104 degrees) and muscle aches help distinguish cold from flu.

Gastrointestinal symptoms – such as nausea, vomiting and diarrhea – are less common in influenza, and these symptoms in absence of the major manifestations listed above makes the diagnosis of flu very unlikely. In late fall through early spring, some diarrheal illnesses (mostly viral) are common, but you are correct that these are NOT influenza.

The flu shot contains viral proteins, not live influenza, and it is incapable of causing the flu. Many people will have a sore arm and sometimes mild fever and body aches after a flu shot. This is just part of the body’s reaction, and it goes away by itself within 24 hours. There is a live influenza vaccine given by nasal spray, which also generally has mild side effects. This may be given to adults under 50.

The flu shot is not perfect: You still can get the flu after receiving the shot. However, the flu shot is effective at reducing the most serious cases of flu, such as influenza pneumonia, which can be life-threatening or fatal.

DEAR DR. ROACH: I’m a healthy 50-year-old woman, and

See HEALTH, Page 8

EVERN WHEN IT’S JUST AROUND THE CORNER.

NEVER GIVE UP UNTIL THEY BUCKLE UP.

VISIT SAFERCAR.GOV/KIDSBUCKLEUP

www.nhtsa.gov



Health

From Page 7

I recently had my gallbladder removed. What are the effects of not having this organ? – I.T.

The gallbladder stores bile and release it when necessary after a meal. Bile is made by the liver and is needed for proper digestion, especially of fats. After gallbladder removal, usually because of gallstones, the liver takes over the job by storing bile in bile ducts, and releasing it at the right time, under the influence of hormones, such as cholecystokinin. After surgery, most people have no problems with digestion, as their body gets used to the new status quo after a few weeks.

Rarely, people who have had

their gallbladder removed can develop postcholecystectomy syndrome, which manifests as upper abdominal pain. There are several possible causes. Discovering it requires expert evaluation, usually by the surgeon, and it often involves CT scans and a special kind of MRI (MRCP) to evaluate the biliary tract. Retained stones in the bile ducts, leakage of bile and strictures (narrowings) in the bile ducts are the most common causes of PCS.

Dr. Roach regrets that he is unable to answer individual letters, but will incorporate them in the column whenever possible. Readers may email questions to [ToYourGoodHealth@med.cornell.edu](mailto:ToYourGoodHealth@med.cornell.edu). (c) 2019 North America Synd., Inc. All Rights Reserved.

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: Y equals T

VOBEK YOK GQUBK GBWOY  
OSUK NDLYOKL CDZCKIDKAY  
UKLCBQAC, YOBC VBEE ZK YOK  
NBLCY SGQAW CKIDKEC.

Answer Page 4

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Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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

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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New claims appeals offer three options



by Freddy Groves

After 18 months of being studied and readied, the Appeals Modernization Act of 2017 finally became official last month. You'll now have more choice in how disability claim denials will be handled, hopefully with a speedier path through the process.

You'll have three choices:

- With a Higher-Level Review, a "more experienced adjudicator" will do a new review of old decisions. The Department of Veterans Affairs hopes to have these claims completed in an average of 125 days.

- With a Supplemental Claim, new information and evidence can be submitted. The VA will have a duty to assist in that process. It hopes to have these claims also completed in an average of 125 days.

- If you want to appeal to the Board, you'll have three choices: direct review, evidence or hearing. The VA hopes to complete direct reviews in an average of 365 days. (It used to take three to seven years!) Direct review doesn't include new evidence; the other two options do.

The VA's budget includes 605 more employees who will establish decision-making centers in Florida and Washington, joining a third center in Washington, D.C.

For decisions received Feb. 19, 2019, or later, go online to [www.va.gov/decision-reviews](http://www.va.gov/decision-reviews) for more information. You have one year from the date of your decision to ask for a review.

For decisions received before that date, there's a different process. See the information at [www.va.gov/disability/file-an-appeal](http://www.va.gov/disability/file-an-appeal).

Make note of the phrase "a more experienced adjudicator" mentioned above. If you end up with a lawyer helping you, that

phrase – the VA's own words – might come in handy if you can show that the previous adjudicator wasn't up to the job.

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- "If your water pressure in your kitchen or bath faucet seems lower than usual, unscrew the aerator at the end of the faucet and clean out the rust particles. It doesn't take much rust to clog the tiny holes. Easy and quick! If it won't unscrew by hand, a simple pair of pliers is all you need. Don't overtighten when you put it back on."

– J.F. in Washington

- Sprinkle fabric furniture with baking soda and let it sit for 15 minutes before vacuuming it up. It freshens the scent.

- If you have a "magazine problem," this tip from D.E. in Texas might help: "I have a magazine stand next to my recliner. I allow myself exactly as many magazines as will fit in the stand. So, it's 'One In, One Out' for me. When I get a new magazine, I retire one I have been hanging on to – I give it to a friend or leave it in the common room for others, or if I've torn pages out to keep, I put it in the recycling bin."

- Steam clean your microwave by boiling two cups of water with either a few lemon slices or a couple tablespoons of baking soda added. Microwave in a glass dish or bowl for five minutes, then let it sit for five more. Then wipe clean.

- If you install a magnetic strip inside your bathroom cabinet, you can use it to corral bobby pins or your tweezers. The first seem to multiply on the floor, and the other seem always to get lost.

- "When we were remodeling, we ended up with a scrap of crown molding. My husband mounted it over the top of the window in the kitchen, and it looks so fancy – it really dresses the window up!"

– I.S. via email

Send your tips to Now Here's a Tip, 628 Virginia Drive, Orlando, FL 32803. (c) 2019 King Features Synd., Inc.

GO FIGURE! by Linda Thistle

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.

DIFFICULTY: ★★

★ Moderate ★★ Difficult  
★★★ GO FIGURE!

	×		+		17
+		–		+	
	–		×		12
×		×		×	
	×		+		23
27		21		26	

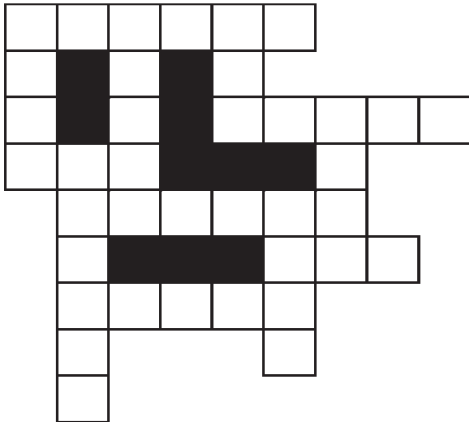
1 2 3 4 5 7 8 8 9

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Answer Page 4



ADP  
MONLIE  
♥ISDER  
NIMA  
EPISOM  
♥SNO  
DESP  
♥NASEM  
♥NAD  
♥ENIMAD  
♥MESDI  
♥EIDA



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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.

Answer Page 4