

## NEWSBRIEFS

### Scholarships

The 2021 Elks Most Valuable Student (MVS) scholarship contest is open to any high school senior who is a United States citizen. The Elks National Foundation (ENF) will award a total of 500 four-year scholarships ranging from \$4,000 to \$50,000. Judging criteria includes academics, leadership, financial need, and community service. Application deadline is November 15. Applications are available online at enf.elks.org/MVS.

— Teddy Martinez

### Artists sought

The El Paso Children's Museum will commission regional artists to create four installations for the spectacular Snohetta-designed building, scheduled to open in 2022. The budget for each installation ranges from \$5,000 to \$15,000. The pieces will complement four distinct zones in the museum, which will be built at 201 W. Main, just north of the El Paso Museum of Art. Artists with large art installation experience are preferred. Interested artists should email info@epcmuseum.org for more details. The deadline to request details is Friday, November 13, 2020. Completed proposals must be submitted by 5 p.m. MST Monday, November 30, 2020 to Stephanie Otero, soter@epcf.org. Artists must cc Karla Salazar at ksalazar@epchildren.org.

— Eric Pearson

### A blessing in disguise

It took 50 years or so and a global pandemic but long-lost sisters, 53-year-old Bev Boro and 73-year-old Doris Crippen, finally found each other. They were separated when Boro was about six months old. Both had been searching in vain for each other all these years and they were finally reunited when Crippen fell ill as a result of the COVID-19 virus. She survived her bout with the deadly disease and was being treated in the aftermath at a rehab facility in Fremont, NE where Boro is employed as a Medication Aide. Boro recognized her sister's name while reviewing an updated patient list and, as Crippen put it, her disease turned out to be "a blessing."

— John Grimaldi

*The soundness of your ideas are more important than the sound of your words.*

— Quips & Quotes

## Sofer is newest U.S. Attorney in Texas

By Alfredo Vasquez  
Special to the Courier

TEXAS – Gregg N. Sofer has taken charge of the Western District of Texas office as its new United States Attorney, after U.S. Attorney John F. Bash's recent announcement that he was resigning to join the private sector.

Sofer takes over for Bash, who served eight years with the Department of Justice (DOJ) in different capacities. Prior to his departure, Bash indicted alleged Cielo Vista Walmart shooter Patrick Crusius on federal hate crime charges.

The new U.S. attorney will now oversee the government's efforts to prosecute the alleged gunman in the 2019 shooting in El Paso that killed 23 people and injured dozens more. Crusius, the alleged gunman, is charged federally with more

than 20 counts of hate crimes resulting in death and more than 40 charges of firing a weapon in relation to the hate crimes, according to an indictment.

Sofer was officially sworn-in by Chief U.S. District Judge Orlando Garcia at the federal courthouse in San Antonio last week, following his appointment made by Attorney General William P. Barr, which was announced in early October.

"The Western District of Texas is one of the largest, busiest, and most diverse districts in the United States. Every day, the women and men of the U.S. Attorney's Office diligently work to protect our communities, prosecute the criminals who prey upon the weak and vulnerable, defend the interests of the United States, and safeguard the rights of the people who live in the 68 counties we serve," Sofer said in a public statement.

"In my 29 years of public service, I have

### U.S. Attorneys

U.S. Attorneys serve as the nation's principal lawyers under the direction of the Attorney General of the United States of America. U.S. Attorneys are appointed by the President of the United States, with the advice and consent of the U.S. Senate, and serve at the direction of the Attorney General. There are 93 United States Attorneys appointed throughout the United States and its territories, each responsible for a specific judicial district. The Western District of Texas is one of four federal judicial districts in Texas, and one of the largest in the country.



— Photo courtesy U.S. Department of Justice

**United States Attorney Gregg N. Sofer is the new chief federal law enforcement officer for the Western District of Texas.**

worked to seek justice for crime victims and bring accountability to those who place their interests over those of society. It is an honor and a privilege to continue this mission alongside the Assistant U.S. Attorneys, support personnel, law enforcement officers, judges, and court staff that make this district so great," Sofer affirmed.

As U.S. Attorney, Sofer is the chief federal law enforcement officer in the Western District of Texas. He is responsible for prosecuting violations of federal law and representing the federal government in civil litigation where the United States is a party.

The Western District of Texas encompasses about 93,000 square miles and employs over 300 persons. The main headquarters is in San Antonio, but staffed offices are also stationed in El Paso, Austin, Midland, Del Rio, Waco, and Alpine.

Prior to his appointment, Sofer served as Counselor to the U.S. Attorney General. He handled criminal and national security matters as well as crisis response. Before going to DOJ's main offices in Washington D.C., he served for 12 years in the Austin Division of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Western District of Texas.

As an Assistant U.S. Attorney, Sofer handled national security, fraud, violent crime, and corruption cases, among others. His last trial in Austin was a RICO prosecution that resulted in a life sentence without parole for a man who attempted to assassinate a state court judge as she sat in her car with her family, according to a DOJ report.

The report offers some of Sofer's

## Najera is San Eli HS honored ex

By Jeannie Meza-Chavez  
Special to the Courier

Elementary School in the San Elizario Independent School District (SEISD). She is married to Jose Najera and has a daughter named Alexis; and son Gabriel that is also a SEISD Graduate. Her parents are Jose and Ofelia Villa.

Najera came to work for SEISD in 1994 and takes pride in helping the basketball and baseball programs at the high school with fundraisers and concessions. As for her 26 years of service with SEISD, Najera said, "My students inspire me. Seeing their faces when they grasp a concept that they have been struggling with gives me the motivation to continue doing what I'm doing." She is especially proud to have a former 1st-grade student, Mr. Javier Rodriguez, teaching kinder alongside her. She added, "I always tell my students that I was just like them. I grew up in San Eli, and

if I can do it, so can they!" One of her favorite quotes is from Ralph Waldo Emerson "The only person you are destined to become is the person you decide to be."

Najera's message to her students is different from the one that she and her graduating class received from a former teacher at San Elizario High School when were told they were not smart enough to go to college. "When you are poor, you are seen by the world as NOT smart. This made me want to prove everyone wrong. Just because you are economically disadvantaged does not mean you are dumb. And this is the message I try to instill in my students. If you work hard enough on what you want in life you will accomplish anything you set your mind to do." She vividly recalls another difficult moment, which was "Being told by my English teacher that I was not smart enough to go to college was a defining moment for me. This made me want



— Photo courtesy San Elizario ISD

**Araceli Najera**

See NAJERA, Page 4

See SOFER, Page 5





The way this administration has handled the public disclosure of President Donald Trump’s condition will become a case study on mismanaging a chief executive’s personal health crisis. But then, what’s new? The Trump mishandling of the entire pandemic is already one for the ages. No one knows how many

# President Trump’s COVID credibility

deaths can be attributed to the mixed messages, total lies and erroneous information peddled by POTUS and his people continuously minimizing the risk of the coronavirus.

As a result, we have little idea of what’s going on with the state of the health of President Trump. We do know what is purported to be video of a weary Trump walking on his own to Marine One, his helicopter, to be transported to Walter Reed hospital. We do know that after so many questions were raised

about his actual condition that he appeared on still another tape to declare: “I came here; wasn’t feeling so well. I feel much better now.” But was he propped up for it?

And the reckless decision of the Trumpster to take a little road trip and giving a thumbs up to supporters was an obvious raising of another digit to his doctors’ preferences – not only that, endangering the lives of everyone riding in his hermetically sealed armored vehicle.

White House head physician

Sean Conley hasn’t helped. His rosy press briefing has left huge gaps in what the nation needed to hear. Finally, Conley admitted Trump was on oxygen. The president’s early checkout flies right in the face of reluctant disclosures that his treatment had included dexamethasone, a steroid usually given to patients to treat severe lung abnormalities.

Was Dr. Conley’s inconsistency the usual physician dissembling, or was he ordered from on high to bob and weave? Was Trump’s return to normal temperature

from high fever the result of the aspirin he took?

The televised encounter with reporters was so embarrassing that immediately after the first briefing ended, “a person familiar with the president’s health” painted a drearier description: “The president’s vitals over the last 24 hours were very concerning and the next 48 hours will be critical in terms of his care.”

It turns out the anonymous

See FRANKEN, Page 7

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

## Masters of COVID gloom, Lysenkoism, and squirrels

The media, taking their cue from George Orwell’s 1984’s daily “Two Minute Hate<sup>1</sup>,” provide a constant drumbeat of one-sided political talking points and incomplete statistics about COVID-19. It is designed to wear us down. The recovery of President Trump and many others gives us another side of the picture.

When questioned about motives for the unrelenting negativity, folks say they are following the science. This statement merits an historical note of caution about comingling politics and science. Nikolai Vavilov<sup>2</sup> had data-driven work that was an accurate exposition of agricultural genetics. Unfortunately, Trofim Lysenko’s<sup>3</sup> patently wrong, but Marxist leaning ideas on the science of agriculture caught the eye of Joseph Stalin. Lysenko buried Vavilov’s work, thousands starved, and Vavilov rotted in prison. This episode in science gave rise to an ism: Lysenkoism<sup>4</sup> is any deliberate distortion of scientific facts or theories for purposes that are deemed politically, religiously or socially desirable.

Decades later we are left to tune in to the next episode of political theater, featuring “do as I say, not as I do.” One of Ms. Pelosi’s pastimes is lecturing the President on the value of wearing a mask. Then we see Ms. Pelosi sashaying around with no mask<sup>5</sup>; her designer mask flopping around with her exposed nose<sup>6</sup> (that harbors the bulk of the coronavirus). And in a when the camera’s away, the mice will play moment, Mr. Biden doffed his

ever-present, over-sized mask to speak with Anderson Cooper face to face<sup>7</sup>. And for comic relief, Mr. Biden lowered his mask to cough in his hand<sup>8</sup> – not even his elbow!

Where’s the science? As time has passed and we gain more knowledge and data about the SARS-CoV-2 virus that causes COVID-19, scientists have found several fold lower mortality rates than previously predicted. The CDC has some good news<sup>9</sup> regarding the infection fatality ratio (IFR), the ratio of deaths divided by the number of actual infections with SARS-CoV-2:

- Age 0-19 years: 0.00003, meaning 99.997% of that age group who get the infection will survive;
- Age 20-49 years: 0.0002, meaning 99.98% of that age group who get the infection will survive;
- Age 50-69 years: 0.005, meaning 99.5% of that age group who get the infection will survive;
- Age 70+ years: 0.054, meaning 94.6% of that age group who get the infection will survive.

Additionally, in the United States, hospitalizations and deaths are down, cases – even with more testing – are leveling off and more successful treatments are available.

Joe Biden tells us that when he wants to learn about COVID, he consults “the scientists,” one of whom is Ezekiel “let me die when I’m 75” Emanuel. Dr. Emanuel, a breast oncologist, believes we should stay in a lockdown

until November 2021<sup>10</sup>. He also is the co-creator of the Complete Lives System<sup>11</sup>.” This medical care rationing system prioritizes persons with “instrumental value,” i.e., individuals with “future usefulness.” Joe Biden should watch his back.

California’s Governor Gavin Newsom has admitted<sup>12</sup> that he saw “the potential” in the COVID crisis for “a new progressive era” in state and national politics. Instead of using the CDC data and science to lift restrictions of the activities of the residents, he established a new parameter: the Equity Metric<sup>13</sup>. No one in a county can open until the test positivity rates in its most disadvantaged neighborhoods are not worse than the overall county positivity rate.

This is just what we need: prolonging lockdowns when data have shown they are harmful to society. The CDC reported<sup>14</sup> that 40 percent of thousands surveyed reported at least one adverse mental or behavioral health condition. Thirteen percent started or increased substance use to cope with stress or emotions related to COVID-19 lockdowns. Eleven percent seriously considered suicide. Moreover, despite increases in telemedicine, evaluations of cardiovascular risk factors<sup>15</sup> have dropped by 50 percent. Between March 1 and April 18, 2020 there was a 46 percent decrease<sup>16</sup> in diagnoses of the six common

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**PUBLISHED:**  
Published each Thursday (minimum 50 issues) by Homesteader News, Inc. Office open Monday through Thursday.

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Homesteader  
Est. 1973  
News, Inc.

## Sign up for Medicare Part B online

By Ray Vigil  
*Special to the Courier*

Note: When completing the forms:

- State, “I want Part B coverage to begin (MM/YY)” in the remarks section of the CMS-40B form or online application.
- If your employer is unable to complete Section B, please complete that portion as best you can on behalf of your employer without your employer’s signature.
- Submit one of the following types of secondary evidence by uploading it from a saved document on your computer:
  - Income tax returns that show health insurance premiums paid.
  - W-2s reflecting pre-tax medical contributions.
  - Pay stubs that reflect health insurance premium deductions.
  - Health insurance cards with a policy effective date.
  - Explanations of benefits paid by the GHP or LGHP.
  - Statements or receipts that reflect payment of health insurance premiums.

Please let your friends and loved ones know about this online, mail, or fax option.

For many people, signing up for Medicare Part B doesn’t require you to leave the comfort of home. Please visit our Medicare Part B webpage at [secure.ssa.gov/acu/opandler/loginSuccess](https://secure.ssa.gov/acu/opandler/loginSuccess) if:

- You’re enrolled in Medicare Part A.
- You would like to enroll in Part B during the Special Enrollment Period.
- You can complete form CMS-40B (*Application for Enrollment in Medicare – Part B [Medical Insurance]*) at [www.cms.gov/Medicare/CMS-Forms/CMS-Forms/CMS-Forms-Items/CMS017339](https://www.cms.gov/Medicare/CMS-Forms/CMS-Forms/CMS-Forms-Items/CMS017339) and CMS-L564 at [www.cms.gov/Medicare/CMS-Forms/CMS-Forms/Downloads/CMS-L564E.pdf](https://www.cms.gov/Medicare/CMS-Forms/CMS-Forms/Downloads/CMS-L564E.pdf) (*Request for Employment Information*) online.

You can also fax the CMS-40B and CMS-L564 to 1-833-914-2016; or return forms by mail to your local Social Security office. Please contact Social Security at 1-800-772-1213 (TTY 1-800-325-0778) if you have any questions.

Archives: [www.wtxcc.com](http://www.wtxcc.com)



# No, the Democrats won't pack the Court

For many progressive opinion-makers, the only way to save the Supreme Court is to destroy it. They believe the best response to the Republican-held Senate confirming a Trump nominee to fill Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg's seat on the Supreme Court is to pack the Court if Democrats win in November. Holding out the court-packing threat, they argue, also might give Republicans second thoughts about filling the vacancy.

For the Democrats, court-packing would be a murder-suicide. It would end the Supreme Court as we know it, and almost certainly bring a swift and decisive end to Democratic congressional majorities. There's a reason Republicans aren't taking the threat seriously in their calculations.

No matter how infuriated a party is, the rules of political gravity still apply. A president is at the high point of his power at the outset, steadily losing juice over time.

Would Biden spend precious capital on court-packing early in his presidency? If so, voting, green energy and health care legislation would take a back seat.

If, instead, all of that legislation went first, then court-packing would be pushed toward the

back of the line, when Biden would have diminished clout for the political fight of a lifetime.

The question of timing would enter in another way. If Democrats managed to add Court seats in the second year of a Biden presidency, how much time and political capital would they have left to fill them before the midterms? If Republicans took back the Senate, they certainly wouldn't fill them.

And, of course, when Republicans hold the presidency and Congress again, they'd add their own seats or subtract the Democratic ones, making the entire exercise a nullity.

It's also true that, as a general rule, big changes happen in our system when a party makes a sustained public case for them prior to an election. Very few elected Democrats are willing to come out in favor of packing the court, and Biden the other day pointedly refused to endorse it.

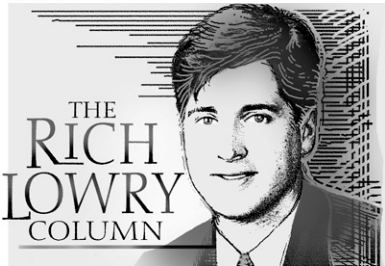
Making court-packing the major initiative of his presidency would be an awkward fit for Biden. It would validate the critique of him as weak and prone to getting pushed around by the left. It would blow up his hope to bring some normality back to Washington. It would inexorably make the destruction of the legitimacy of

the Supreme Court part of his legacy, when he imagines himself an institutionalist.

The argument that Republicans have already "packed the court" is a false equivalence. Yes, Republicans have used hardball tactics to keep open, or now to try to fill, vacancies. But these seats opened up in the natural course of events. They weren't conjured out of nowhere in a fit of pique or vengeance.

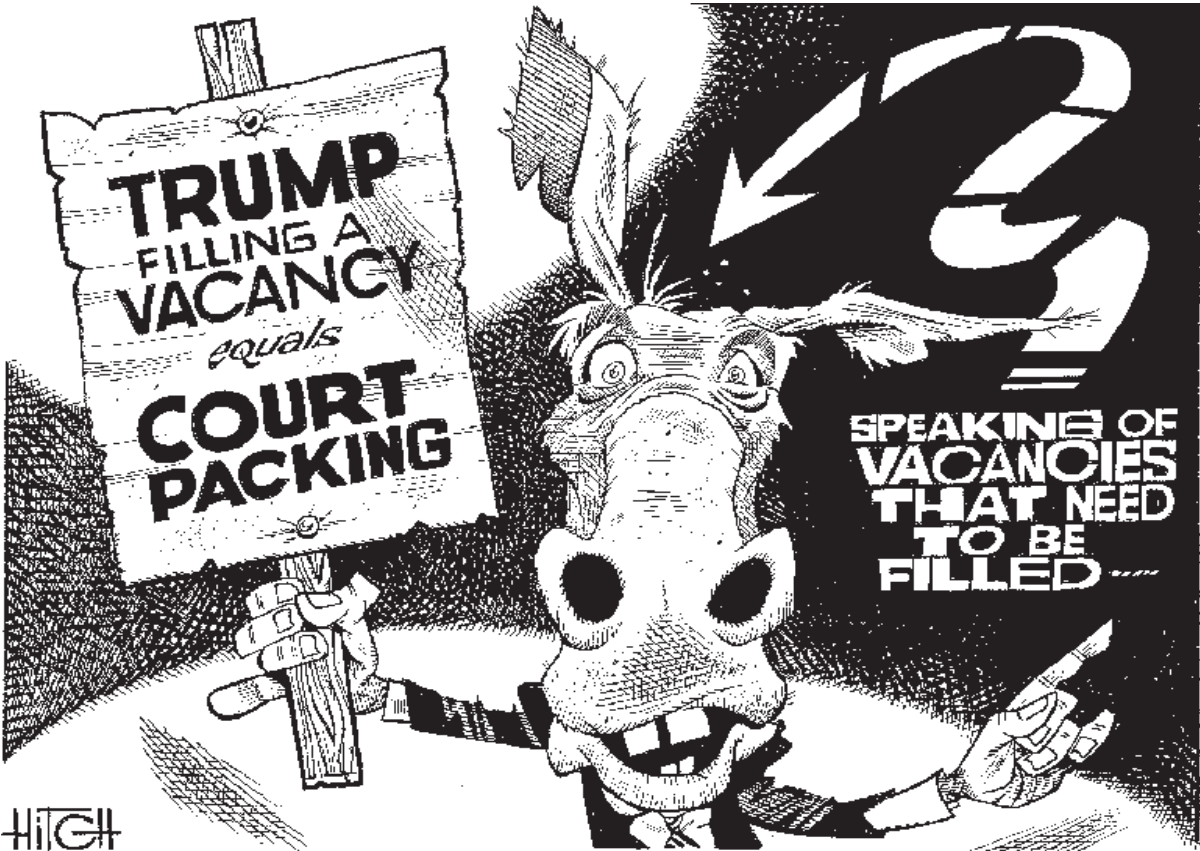
It easy to pound the table and demand an incredibly momentous change to our system when you don't have power and don't have to cope with the consequences. It's another to act in the face of vigorous opposition and with nervous officeholders in marginal districts or states looking for a way out.

No matter how much progressives want elected Democrats to write the ransom



note, they aren't going to take the Supreme Court captive next year, let alone kill the hostage.

Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review. (c) 2020 by King Features Synd., Inc.





# DEA commits resources to Project Safeguard

## Operation intensifies DEA’s efforts to combat drug-related violent crime

By DEA Public Affairs Office

NATION – Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) Acting Administrator Timothy J. Shea is committing more DEA resources to help reduce violent crime in communities throughout the country through Project Safeguard. Under this initiative the DEA will identify and prioritize ongoing drug trafficking investigations with a nexus to violent crime.

Since it began in August 2020, Project Safeguard has resulted in nearly 12 cases, more than 29 arrests – including one DEA fugitive, more than 39 seized firearms, nearly \$467,536 is seized assets, and 514.21 kilograms of seized controlled substances in the El Paso Field Division alone. In recent months, violent crime has spiked in numerous cities and regions around the country, and drug trafficking is responsible, in part, for this violence.

“Drug trafficking and violent crime are inextricably linked,” said Shea. “From

the extreme levels of violence in Mexican cartels, to the open air drug markets in American cities, drug traffickers employ violence, fear, and intimidation to ply their trade. Neighborhoods across our country are terrorized by violent drug trafficking organizations that have little regard for human life, and profit from the pain and suffering of our people. Along with our law enforcement partners, DEA is committed to safeguarding the health and safety of our communities.”

“There is no doubt that drug trafficking and violent crime are linked,” said Kyle W. Williamson, Special Agent in Charge of the Drug Enforcement Administration’s El Paso Division. “We’ve seen firsthand how Mexican cartels and local street gangs have created a dangerous alliance to distribute some of the deadliest drugs on the planet to every corner of our nation. That is why we will continue to work with our law enforcement partners to deliver a swift, calculated, intel-driven response.”

Working in collaboration with our federal, state, and local partners, including the Bureau

of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and the U.S. Marshals Service, DEA’s Project Safeguard will comprise three focus areas to address the growing violent crime threat in many cities across the United States:

- Disrupting, dismantling, and destroying the most significant violent drug trafficking organizations throughout the United States;
- Increasing collaboration with ATF to ensure effective federal prosecution of firearms traffickers associated with drug trafficking organizations; and
- Prioritizing the capture of DEA fugitives who employ violence as part of drug trafficking.

The traffickers that flood our communities with deadly drugs, including opioids, heroin, fentanyl, meth and cocaine, are often the same criminals responsible for the high rates of assault, murder, and gang activity in our cities. These criminals employ fear, violence, and intimidation to traffic drugs, and in doing so, exacerbate a drug crisis that claims more than 70,000 American lives every year. DEA is committed to treating these crimes as homicides, where appropriate.



By Lucie Winborne

- Along with henna, old-fashioned hair dye ingredients included the blood of black cows and crushed tadpoles in warm oil.
- While filming “Jailhouse Rock” in 1957, Elvis Presley inhaled his tooth cap as he slid down a pole in the opening dance number. It lodged in his lung and required surgical removal, but aside from a little hoarseness for a few days, the King made a fairly easy recovery.

- Arachibutyrophobia is the fear of peanut butter getting stuck to the roof of your mouth.

- That little white paper strip coming out of the top of Hershey’s Kisses is called a plume and was originally introduced by the company to distinguish the product from phony knock-off candies.

- The popular kids’ game “Operation” was invented by John Spinello, a sophomore at the University of Illinois in 1962, as part of a class assignment. Sadly, he only made \$500 off the game after selling the prototype.

- By the way, in case you’ve ever wondered, the “patient” in “Operation” is named Cavity Sam.

- “Gigi” author Sidonie-Gabrielle Colette could only write after she had plucked all the fleas off her cat.

- If you had to pick a “standard” pencil color, you’d probably think of a yellow-gold shade – and that’s no accident. When pencils went into mass production in the 1890s, the finest available graphite fillings came from China. Manufacturers wanted everyone to know that they used only the best Chinese graphite, so they painted their pencils yellow, the traditional color of Chinese royalty.

Thought for the Day: “Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.”  
– Martin Luther King, Jr.

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## Najera

From Page 1

to prove her wrong.”

Help came by a teacher named Frank G. Duran. “[He] Always believed in me, I was able to prove my English teacher wrong,” said Najera. She credits Duran

for inspiring her to becoming a teacher. She said, “He was one of the very few Hispanic teachers we had here in the district. I saw him, and decided I wanted to be an inspiration to others just like he was to me.”

According to Irene Jaquez, SEISD Board Vice President and Duran’s daughter, Duran

lived across from Alarcon Elementary School. He started teaching science at the age of 22, moved into special education and eventually became an administrator. During his 30-year career in SEISD he took on numerous duties such as a bus driver, football coach, and director of special education.

“He was involved in Brown vs. the State Board of Education alongside other Region 19 administrators and he just loved the kids and had a soft spot for all, especially the troublemakers. They all remember him for getting swatted with his paddle but had great respect for him

because they knew he was fair and had their best interest in mind,” Jaquez said.

Najera agreed, “He always pushed me to do my best and not let anyone put me down because of where I was from.” She credits Duran for molding her into the person she is now.

One of Najera’s proudest moments is being a first-generation high school and college graduate. She adds, “No one in my family had ever finished high school; so, graduating from the University of Texas at El Paso was one of my proudest moments for me and my entire family.”



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## Notice of Public Meeting to Discuss Anthony Independent School District’s State Financial Accountability Rating (FIRST)

The Anthony Independent School District will hold a public meeting at 6:00 P.M. on Wednesday, November 18, 2020 in the Anthony Middle School Library, 813 Sixth Street, Anthony, Texas 79821.

The purpose of the meeting is to discuss Anthony Independent School District’s rating on the State’s Financial Accountability Rating System.

WTCC: 10/29/20

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## CryptoQuip Answer

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# Moments in time

THE HISTORY CHANNEL

- On Oct. 26, 1984, at Loma Linda University Medical Center in California, Dr. Leonard Bailey performs the first baboon-to-human heart transplant, replacing a 14-day-old infant girl's defective heart. "Baby Fae" survived the operation, but died of heart failure after 20 days.
- On Oct. 27, 1659, William Robinson and Marmaduke Stevenson, two Quakers who came from England in 1656 to escape religious persecution, are executed in the Massachusetts Bay Colony for their religious beliefs. The colony had banned Quakers under penalty of death.
- On Oct. 28, 1886, President Grover Cleveland dedicates The Statue of Liberty, a gift of friendship from the people of France, in New York Harbor. Originally known as "Liberty Enlightening the World," the statue was to commemorate the Franco-American alliance during the American Revolution.
- On Oct. 29, 1971, Duane Allman, leader of the Allman Brothers Band, is killed when he loses control of his motorcycle and hits a flatbed truck in Macon, Georgia. He was 24. One year later, the band's bassist Berry Oakley died in a very similar motorcycle accident just a few blocks away.
- On Oct. 30, 1890, Oakland, California, enacts a law against opium, morphine and cocaine. It allowed only doctors to prescribe these drugs, which had been legal for cures or pain relief.
- On Oct. 31, 1957, Toyota hopes to saturate the American market with its inexpensive Toyopet Crown sedans. It was a flop: The car could barely meet California's roadworthiness standards, guzzled extraordinary amounts of gas and oil, and tended to shake violently, overheat and stall.
- On Nov. 1, 1765, despite widespread opposition in the American colonies, Parliament enacts the Stamp Act, designed to raise revenue for British military in America. The Stamp Act was designed to force colonists to use special stamped paper in the printing of newspapers, pamphlets, almanacs and playing cards.

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## Sofer

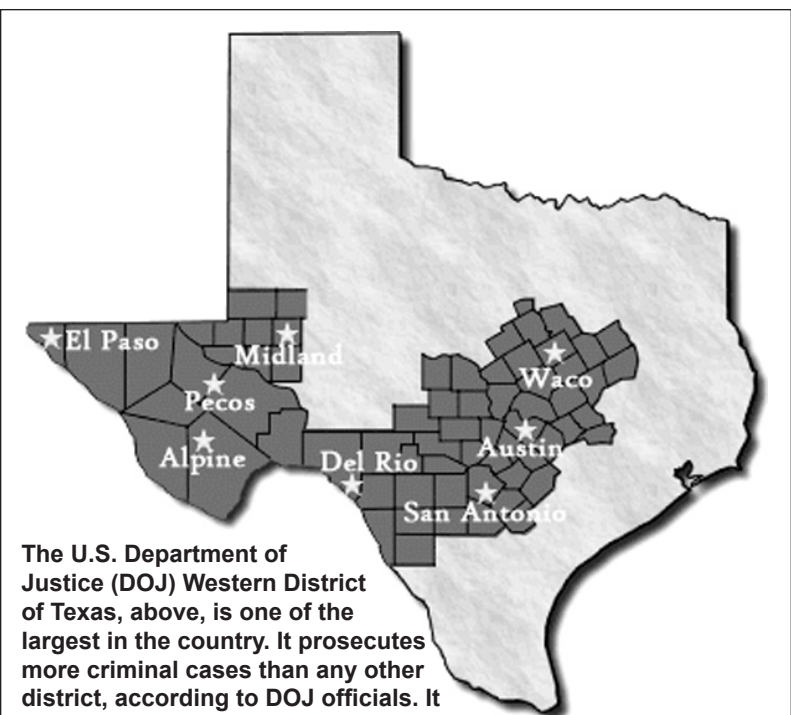
From Page 1

other notable prosecutions including that of an individual who was planning to fight for ISIS overseas; a defendant who built a bomb intending to kill soldiers at Ft. Hood; the former Jarrell Police Chief who was involved in a bribery scheme where he fraudulently provided illegal aliens with immigration benefits; and a money laundering conspiracy involving the owner of several Austin nightclubs.

In 2018, Sofer was promoted to Chief of the Criminal Division. In that role, he was responsible for the supervision of over 120 Assistant U.S. Attorneys and all aspects of the district's criminal practice.

From 2003 to 2007, Sofer was a trial attorney in the National Security Division at DOJ in Washington D.C., where he led the investigation and prosecution of international terrorism cases. He also served as the Director of the Office of Justice for Victims of Overseas Terrorism and Director of the National Gang Targeting Enforcement and Coordination Center.

Sofer started his legal career in New York City's Manhattan District Attorney's Office. Among a wide variety of cases, he prosecuted violent gang, murder and firearms trafficking cases for over 11 years, distinguishing himself as a skilled trial lawyer. Sofer earned his J.D. from New York University School of Law and his B.A. from Rutgers University.



The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) Western District of Texas, above, is one of the largest in the country. It prosecutes more criminal cases than any other district, according to DOJ officials. It covers 68 counties- with offices in El Paso, Alpine, Austin, Del Rio, Midland, San Antonio, and Waco. The district encompasses more than 6.5 million Texans.

— Image courtesy U.S. Department of Justice



# IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO PREVENT DIABETES



## Take your first step today

**If you have a family history of type 2 diabetes, you are at risk of the disease.**

**It's about small steps:** Lose a small amount of weight by walking or biking for 30 minutes 5 days a week, and by making healthy food choices, to prevent or delay type 2 diabetes. In fact, these small steps work even better for people over 60 than for any other age group.

**For free information about preventing type 2 diabetes, visit [www.YourDiabetesInfo.org](http://www.YourDiabetesInfo.org) or call 1-888-693-NDEP (6337); TTY: 1-866-569-1162.**



**[www.YourDiabetesInfo.org](http://www.YourDiabetesInfo.org)**

A message from the National Diabetes Education Program, sponsored by the National Institutes of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.



# After disastrous season, NBA plans changes for 2021

By Steve Escajeda  
*Special to the Courier*

Based on the recent TV ratings of the NBA Finals and playoffs altogether, I’m assuming none of you actually witnessed the Los Angeles Lakers defeat the Miami Heat by four games to two.

If you’re like me, you have to take the media’s word for it, because I didn’t watch a single second of the Finals either.

Well, the NBA season was interrupted (like everything else) by the coronavirus pandemic, but managed to get the teams back on the court, in the city of Orlando with no fans in the stands.

It was weird, it didn’t feel like real basketball with fake fans on the TV screen and fake fan noises being pumped

in through the monitor.

It was extremely difficult to watch, and obviously, many of you didn’t bother.

The season ended about two weeks ago and guess what, the league is already making plans for the start of the 2021 season. The preliminary plans are to start the season before Christmas Day.

That’s an awfully quick turnaround. It’s less than half the usual time between the end of one season and the beginning of the next.

But there are a few other changes that the league is trying to institute.

The first is rather than playing the usual 82-game schedule, the NBA has decided to narrow it down to just 72 games. And this time they want to play the games in the teams’ home arena with some fans in the stands.

Of course the stadiums won’t be full, but they’ll decide the capacity based on how the virus is doing.

They’re also talking about instituting a play-in tournament to decide which teams make the playoffs. I don’t know if this is a good idea or not, sometimes people in suits love to over-think things.

It also looks like the league is going to do away with the All-Star Game or All-Star Weekend, which was scheduled for Indianapolis.

Why the main reason for the reduction in regular-season games? This would allow for the NBA to finish the season before the Summer Olympics in Japan.

Of course this is assuming there will still be a Summer Olympics in Japan. And if there were, would any countries go? I

guess we’ll have to wait and see.

Around the league, there’s support by the players to start playing again by Christmas. But there’s also going to be a lot of chaos coming out of a Nov. 18 draft, free agency and training camps, that would need to open shortly after Thanksgiving.

And playing all those games in their individual cities, would that increase the number of NBA teams facing positive coronavirus tests for players and staff?

Another thing that is changing, according to NBA Commissioner Adam Silver, is the social messaging on the court and player’s uniforms.

“I would say, in terms of the messages you see on the court and our jerseys, this was an extraordinary moment in time when we began these discussions with the players and what we all lived through this summer. My sense is there’ll be somewhat a return to normalcy, that those messages will largely be left to be delivered off the floor. And I understand those people who are saying ‘I’m on your side, but I just want to watch a basketball game.’”

I think Silver’s eyes lit up when the ratings were down 70 percent.

There are other things that will be affected next season, such as a dip in players’ salaries because of the lack of fan revenue because of the virus.

Let’s face it, no money coming in from the fans in the arenas and a terrible drop in TV advertising revenue, like any other business, it’s going to affect the bottom line.

There’s little doubt that the NBA’s return this past summer was a complete disaster, but at least they finished the season.

With virus vaccinations being approved and others on the way, you’ve got to think that things will be much better very soon.

Which means things will be back to normal soon, but I don’t think anything will be normal until after 2021.

And yes, things will return to normal – they always do.

## Masters

From Page 2

cancer types. The World Health Organization has finally admitted that lockdowns “make the poor an awful lot poorer<sup>17</sup>.” All of these factors will lead to increase in non-COVID related deaths.

Internationally noted epidemiologists and thousands of physicians from multiple specialties have a solution called “focused protection.” The Great Barrington Declaration<sup>18</sup> posits that “the most compassionate approach that balances the risks and benefits of reaching herd immunity, is to allow those who are at minimal risk of death to live their lives normally to build up immunity to the virus through natural infection, while better protecting those who are at highest risk.”

Squirrels are the cutest little rats with fur you’d ever want to see. But they do carry bubonic plague that is fatal without treatment. We do not kill all the squirrels. Let’s not kill our souls and optimism, terrify our elders into deadly isolation, psychologically cripple our

children, and sentence our society to a generation of anxiety and depression, merely to score political points.

1 - <http://www.george-orwell.org/1984/0.html>

2 - <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Nikolai-Vavilov>

3 - <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Trofim-Lysenko>

4 - <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lysenkoism>

5 - <https://www.fresnobee.com/news/coronavirus/article245445955.html>

6 - <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/congress/pelosi-introduces-bill-create-commission-presidential-capacity-under-25th-amendment-n1242717>

7 - <https://www.westernjournal.com/biden-anderson-cooper-fire-social-distancing-cameras-rolled-not-commercial-break/>

8 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ckaLe6-9T10&app=desktop>

9 - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/planning-scenarios.html>

10 - <https://www.healthline.com/health-news/dr-ezekiel-emanuel-talks-to-healthline-about-bidens-covid-19-task-force#1>

11 - <http://blog.jonolan.net/wp-content/uploads/2009/08/complete-lives>

12 - <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/>

california-newsom-coronavirus-opportunity-progressive-agenda

13 - <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/CaliforniaHealthEquityMetric.aspx>

14 - [https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6932a1.htm?s\\_cid=mm6932a1\\_w](https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6932a1.htm?s_cid=mm6932a1_w)

15 - <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2771191>

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17 - <https://www.news.com.au/world/coronavirus/global/coronavirus-who-backflips-on-virus-stance-by-condemning-lockdowns/news-story/f2188f2aebff1b7b291b297731c3da74>

18 - <https://gbdeclaration.org/>

*Dr. Singleton is a board-certified anesthesiologist and Immediate Past President of the Association of American Physicians and Surgeons. While still working in the operating room, 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.*

## Super Crossword

**ONE TOO MANY ACROSS**

1 Snagged gold, silver or bronze

8 One phoning

14 Away from the shore

20 Typically

21 Get dressed

22 "Gangsta's Paradise" rapper

23 Nation south of Chad

26 Money unit of Japan

27 \_ Grande

28 Jekyll's other side

29 Gotten on one's feet

30 Health facility

33 Showiness

35 Many people born in August

37 Popular hangover remedy

47 Hullabaloo

48 Noel hanging

49 Bylaw, for short

50 Revered Fr. woman

51 Bro's sib

54 Part of a roof

55 Slop over

57 Like short tykes

63 Stylist's stuff

64 Blue Ribbon brewer

65 Prefix with compliance

66 Almost certainly, in

legal cases

77 \_ tai

78 1985 Kate Nelligan film

79 Past

80 1973 #1 hit for Gladys Knight & the Pips

90 PC letters

91 17th state

92 Pince-\_ (gripping glasses)

93 City in south Germany

94 Zippo

95 Shower units

97 Like Mali's desert

101 School with the Bearcats

107 Pal of Garfield

108 Neck-to-waist area

109 Sigh of relief

110 Ravioli, e.g.

113 Bellicose Greek god

117 Regular grind

118 Undecided, on a sched.

121 Pilot's guess

128 Used a razor

129 Blue-purple

130 Truckers' medium

131 Nobelist "Mother"

132 Some waste conduits

133 Apt word formed by this puzzle's missing letters

**DOWN**

1 Bro

2 Suffix with Peking

3 Ex-veep Quayle

4 Too-too

5 Draw in

6 Personal flair

7 Pop singer Lana \_

Rey

8 Make corrupt

9 Sudden raid

10 Mogul Onassis

11 Scotland's Ness, e.g.

12 PayPal's parent, once

13 Rip up

14 Hail, mainly

15 "Sure can!"

16 Ninth-century emperor called "the Pious"

17 Priestly robes

18 Giza's river

19 Injure gravely

24 Foot curve

25 Pertains

30 Mu \_ shrimp

31 Soft food for infants

32 Smog soils it

33 UFO pilots

34 Common job for 99-Down

36 Numerical suffix

38 Wooing gift

39 Solemn vow

40 Liberated, in Germany

41 Kinnear of "Sabrina"

42 Rip up

43 "\_ Nagila"

44 Outing

45 Bark of pain

46 Stare at creepily

51 \_Pei

52 "Let \_ known..."

53 Ex-Cub Sammy

55 Foot coverer

56 Duck locale

57 Old CIA foe

58 Previously named

59 Actor Ron in a loincloth

60 College transcript no.

61 Perplexed

62 Skit show since '75

67 Upscale hotel chain

68 Toe part

69 Use a trowel

70 Actor Ken

71 Hawaii's bird

72 Animated bug film

73 Life sketch, for short

74 Scull, e.g.

75 Fleece-lined boot brand

76 "Sk8er \_" (Avril Lavigne hit)

80 Clickable list

81 "Sign me up"

82 Artist Salvador

83 Position of stressful responsibility

84 Like some spicy food

85 Slope

86 \_-poly

87 Tex-Mex dip, informally

88 K thru 12

89 Gulf nation

95 \_ Lanka

96 Boozing sort

97 \_-cone

98 Protein-making stuff

99 Car club inits.

100 Utmost degree

102 Like many a prayer candle

103 Mingo player on "Daniel Boone"

104 Past

105 Oil or vinegar bottles

106 What ".\_" means in analogies

110 Irksome type

111 Racket-raising

Arthur

112 Nova, e.g.

114 Gives it some gas

115 Falco with four Emmys

116 Store away

118 Classic perfume brand

119 "I'm c-c-cold"

120 "I smell \_!"

122 Tooth doctor's org.

123 Land in eau

124 Govt. media monitor

125 Boise's state: Abbr.

126 Roman 7

127 EarthLink or MSN rival

**Answer Page 4**

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	
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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			125	126	127
128								129							130						
131								132							133						



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



TIGER By Bud Blake



Franken

From Page 2

source was White House Chief of Staff Mark Meadows. But what is the prognosis for a 74-year-old obese man with various other health conditions? And how come Meadows didn't wear a face mask while briefing the huddled reporters?

By the way, Conley explained away his initial prevarication:

"I was trying to reflect the upbeat attitude that the team, the president, over his course of illness, has had." Spinning is not his job. In this kind of situation, the unvarnished truth is required.

How long will the president need to be treated back at "home" at the White House, particularly when he is running for re-election? And is the campaigning Mike Pence preparing for at least a temporary

takeover? Additionally, we need a continuous accounting of the health of Pence and, for that matter, Joe Biden.

This is all a part of the information an "informed electorate" needs in a helter-skelter election that has been made even more chaotic. During his hospital stay, Trump did a Twitter video talking about how much he had learned from his COVID experience. In another tweet, though, he said,

Gluten-free foods aren't a sales gimmick

DEAR DR. ROACH: I have no health issues, but I'm a cheapskate. I see products labeled as "grain-free" or as "gluten-free," but they always cost more than the regular product. Are there any health benefits to using these, or are they marketing gimmicks? – L.C.



They are not marketing gimmicks at all. People with celiac disease have a sensitivity to a protein in gluten, called gliadin. Even small amounts of gluten can cause long-lasting damage to the intestines, and many people with celiac disease will be unable to properly absorb nutrients if they are regularly exposed to gluten. This can manifest with severe symptoms, such as weight loss, diarrhea and severe metabolic disturbance. Or it can trigger much milder ones, such as mild abdominal discomfort after eating, skin changes, anemia or joint pains.

Because the symptoms of celiac disease are so varied, a physician must be fairly convinced it's celiac before making the diagnosis. Biopsy is the gold standard for certainty, but blood testing – if done while consuming a diet containing gluten – is suggestive. I strongly recommend getting a diagnosis before going on a strict gluten-free diet if you suspect celiac disease.

For people with diagnosed celiac disease, strict adherence to a gluten-free diet is essential, and the increasing availability of gluten-free foods has made the lives of people with celiac disease better. Many grains are gluten-free naturally.

There are people with symptoms from gluten-containing foods but who do not have celiac disease. The term is "non-celiac gluten sensitivity." Some people with this condition are sensitive to components of the food other than the gluten, although there are some people who are sensitive to gluten but do not have celiac disease.

For people without NCGS and without celiac disease, avoiding gluten is not necessary. A diet with many different whole grains has been proven to reduce heart disease risk compared with a more meat-based diet.

DEAR DR. ROACH: Please discuss the problem of the thirst mechanism as it relates to the elderly. I'm 70 years old and in almost perfect physical health. I bicycle every day – 75 miles each week. Even with this enormous physical exercise, I am never thirsty all day and night. Also, I do not perspire. I need to force myself to drink water. Why don't I feel thirsty? – M.U.

Thirst is a powerful motivation. In people with an intact thirst mechanism, the desire for water can be overpowering; it's one of the body's main ways of regulating salt and volume in the body. You are exactly right that as people age, the thirst mechanism becomes less powerful, and that tends to leave older people with a slightly higher amount of salt in the body compared with younger people. Remembering to drink water, especially on hot days, reduces the risk of dehydration.

However, people who drink continually may never trigger the thirst response. There are many social cues to drink, and people who are not losing fluid through exertion and sweat may never trigger a strong thirst response. Drinking too much is as dangerous as not drinking enough: If thirst is really impaired, you need to use other mechanisms to monitor fluid status. For example, needing to urinate every several hours (at least) is one way of staying in the right zone.

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). (c) 2020 North America Synd., Inc. All Rights Reserved.

"Don't be afraid of COVID." Apparently he has not learned anything.

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Send Your Newsbrief To: [wtxcc@wtxcc.com](mailto:wtxcc@wtxcc.com)





**Moore Texas** by Roger MOORE  
Oct. 30, 1836: John Jones was appointed Texas' first postmaster.He had a tough row to hoe.

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: R equals G

KG N SWYLHQ WG SWWKVR  
IKZJU EKQJ OWY YL NVJ  
JZNRRQJ OWY WGG, OWY  
DWYHJ IQ LKRQWV-EWDQJ.

Answer Page 4  
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Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

6					5		2	
	2		8			4		
		9		2	3			1
	3		7			1		
5					2		3	8
		2		9				4
9				4			7	
	4				6			9
	6	1	9			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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VA scams in Florida



by Freddy Groves

What’s going on in Florida? It appears more criminals are operating there than in other areas of the country.

One criminal near Tampa worked at the Department of Veterans Affairs as a transportation assistant who awarded contracts to vendors to give rides to VA clinic patients. Vendors had to pay kickbacks to him to be awarded contracts.

Eventually the criminal started up two transportation companies of his own, registering them in the names of his wife and daughter to hide his involvement. Invoices were submitted, and they were paid to the tune of \$305,000 over the course of 17 months.

When the whole scheme started coming down around their heads, they all lied and then got tangled up in those lies. Wife and daughter

claimed they ran the two companies, yet the criminal was the one who registered the vehicles and arranged for insurance. Later, the criminal said his wife and daughter had seized control of the companies without his knowledge and were blackmailing him into giving them transportation contracts and assignments. All three pleaded guilty.

Also on Florida’s west coast, a criminal operated a telemarketing scam where employees sold medical testing to patients and then turned those into prescriptions that looked like exams had been done via telemedicine. Signatures on the fake prescriptions were obtained from doctors in exchange for bribes. The prescriptions, submitted to the VA, netted the criminal over \$3 million, and he’s been sentenced to four years in the federal penitentiary.

Then, on the east coast of Florida, a former VA employee was nabbed for threatening to kill another employee and that employee’s family. Not too bright, leaving threatening messages on somebody’s

cellphone... more than once. This fool could get a year in the federal pen and a \$100,000 fine.

So, is it the sun that does it in Florida?

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• Want a great way to clean around your faucets? The answer may be closer than you think! A worn-out toothbrush can do a much better job of cleaning fixtures than it can your teeth and gums. Simply brush the wet bristles of a toothbrush over the base and it'll get in those nooks and crannies you can't reach with a sponge.

• Remove mildew from plastic shower curtains by spraying them with a mix of bleach and water, or just toss them in the washing machine with your next load of towels.

• “We have a playroom, and the kids argue about who made what mess and who should pick up which toys. We made a cleaning schedule for the room, having one or two children per day responsible to clean up at the end of the day. It was a rough start, but the kids have learned to clean up as they go rather than leave a big mess for someone else (payback is not kind).” — A.M. in Kentucky

• If your vacuum has a paper filter, spray it with your favorite perfume or essential oil. It will blow into the air as you vacuum, leaving behind a pleasant scent.

• “Need your nails to dry in a hurry? You can use the cool setting on your hair dryer. It works really fast.” — L.E. in Georgia

• No red wine for your recipe? You can substitute an equal amount of grape juice or beef broth in most recipes.

• Using your fireplace? Try adding citrus peels to the logs for a nice aroma. They can be a good starter material as well.

Send your tips to Now Here's a Tip, 628 Virginia Drive, Orlando, FL 32803. (c) 2020 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!  
Answer Page 4

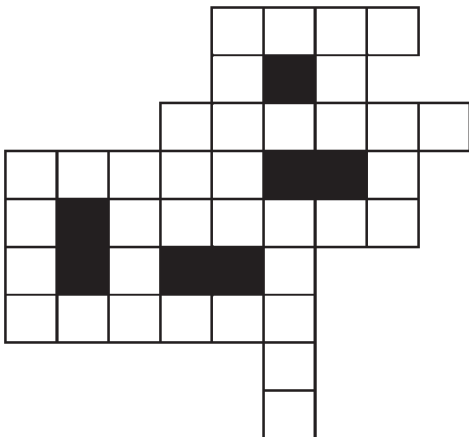
	-		x		20
÷		-		-	
	x		+		4
+		x		x	
	-		x		21
17		6		14	

1 2 2 3 4 6 7 8 9

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UHE  
TUVIER  
ROPLA  
♥CRHA  
HOCLET  
LTO  
VEON  
♥HOTER  
ICH  
ENTHRU  
OAHAL  
TEPL



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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