



– Photos by Alfredo Vasquez

FIELD OF FLOWERS – At the heart of Poppies Fest are the delicate yellow and orange blooms, above, that carpet the Franklin Mountains each spring. While these beautiful flowers are the subject of many pictures, people that step off trails to take pictures destroy other poppies and hamper their ability to flourish for years to come.

Franklin Mountains’ poppies showcased through March 29

By Alfredo Vasquez
Special to the Courier

EL PASO COUNTY – El Paso County residents and visitors have two more Saturdays left to experience the Franklin Mountains’ unique poppy flowers celebration – March 22nd and March 29th.

El Paso Museum of Archeology’s 18th Annual Poppies Fest is a month-long celebration that uses each Saturday to highlight the Franklin Mountains desert landscape. Throughout the month of March,

the museum’s staff hosts a variety of performances and activities that are culturally distinctive to this region.

According to museum officials the month-long celebration of the Mexican Gold Poppies – that bloom across the foothills of the Franklin Mountains – was created to educate, celebrate, and protect the land. Each Saturday features a unique theme with special performances, hands-

of Archeology Director Sebastian Ribas-Normand stated in a recent press release. “Poppies Fest provides a gathering space for our community to come together, support local arts and performers,

and learn about protecting and preserving the natural beauty of the Franklin Mountains,” he stated.

Theme for the March 22nd event is *Fiesta Time!* The schedule for the day are performances by Ballet Folklórico luz del Mundo, the Mountain Movement Interpretive Dance Performers, Grupo Folklórico, as well as activities such as marker magic watercolor workshop with artist Ramiro Ordonez.

The March 29th offering, themed *Get Active, Get Involved!* will feature cardio class presentations by Live Active and Yoga by Shanti Yoga. Other activities for the day will be trail hikes through the poppies fields, exhibits on animal tracks identification, and a printmaking demonstration by Skuishi Press.

While on the trail

excursions, museum officials urge visitors to watch their step and stay on walking paths, and they also

See POPPIES, Page 4

Remaining Schedule

Saturday, March 22

Fiesta Time!

10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Enjoy a festive day featuring artisan vendors, a variety of food trucks, and folklórico performances.

Saturday, March 29

Get Active, Get Involved!

10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Join the Third Annual Poppies Walk, and connect with local organizations focused on community engagement and wellness.

on activities, artisan vendors, food trucks, and live art demonstrations.

“We are proud to host this beloved annual tradition in honor of our poppies,” El Paso Museum



COME ONE, COME ALL – The 18th Annual Poppies Fest is sponsored by the El Paso Museum of Archeology. Event organizers said they are very pleased to be able to bring this family and dog friendly event to the public free of charge.

Canada is not the enemy

Canada has always been an inoffensive country, and how is that working out for it?

President Trump has made more threatening sounds about Canada than about Russia. He is wielding a weapon – sweeping 25% tariffs – that would almost certainly drive our Friendly Neighbor to the North into a recession, while he is

making its leaders and people honestly fearful of the United States.

The madman theory has much to recommend it... when dealing with Hamas or the Houthis. No one heretofore has thought it has similar benefits when handling relations with Ottawa.

It's important to realize the magnitude of the threat Trump is making. About three-quarters of Canadian exports go to the United States, accounting for 20% of Canadian GDP. The Canadian free-market think tank, the Fraser Institute, notes that 25% tariffs would subject the Canadian economy to "the biggest external shock in a century (apart from during the initial phases of the COVID-19 pandemic)."

This is the kind of thing a much larger country does to a miscreant nation when it is punishing

it for pursuing an illicit nuclear weapon, invading a neighbor or engaging in human rights abuses.

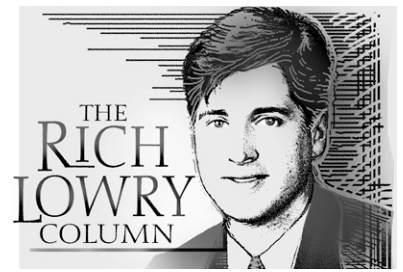
Canada's sin is to be party to a free-trade agreement – the USMCA – that it negotiated in good faith with the same U.S. president now browbeating it.

Defenders of Trump's approach to trade tend to cite China as an example of how pure free-trade theory doesn't work in the real world – China is an authoritarian society, engages in massive intellectual theft and other unfair practices, and can't be trusted not to cut off supply chains on a crisis.

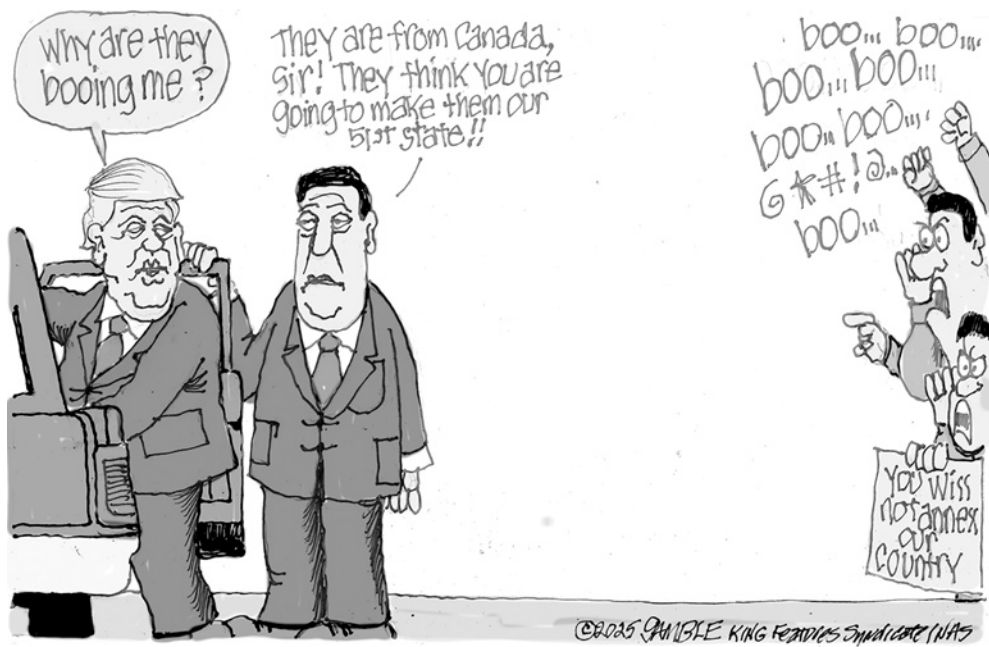
None of this applies to Canada, a friendly, English-speaking country that shares our values and fights wars alongside us, not against us.

That doesn't mean there aren't legitimate complaints about Canada. But the fentanyl trade and illegal border crossings aren't really among them (Canada is not Mexico). It is true that Canada protects politically sensitive sectors of its economy, most notably dairy and lumber.

These matters have long been the subject of



See LOWRY, Page 7



Food for thought By Dr. Glenn Mollette

Love works better than hate

Hate is a toxic emotion. Hate is a dark, negative, tumultuous, heavy, internal, disgusting, poisonous, vile feeling that that will hurt others and hurt you.

Hate lashes out with ugliness spewing out words intended to cut deep into the soul of the intended target. Words are uttered with the intention of inflicting harm. The hater often will try to dress up their speech as though they are kidding. But normally, the window dressing they try to drape around their words doesn't prevent what they say from penetrating deep into someone's heart.

Hate is not a winning way. Hate will eventually act out in violence or

participate in an action that brings pain to someone.

No one was hated more than Jesus. The religious leaders of that day hated him so much that they joyfully participated in all they could do him harm. They killed him as savagely and ruthlessly as anyone in human history. If you want to understand what hate is, what it does and how it acts just think about how the religious leaders made up stuff about Jesus and then promoted his barbaric death on the cross.

Hate is scary because the hater will do anything, without even considering the cost or the ramifications, to assault, hurt or brutalize their intended victims.

Recognizing what hate is and what hate is capable of must make us wary of the haters. You cannot play with a poisonous serpent. You can't pet a ravenous lion or swim with the crocodiles. You will be killed. You can pray for people and try to help those with whom you can have a civilized conversation. Unfortunately, you can't converse with a rattlesnake. You will be bitten and could easily die from such actions

You can't trust the Taliban, Vladimir Putin, the Mexican drug cartel and so on. I'm sure we could all come up with a list. Sadly, we often have to be leery of extremists who can only see their points of view. If you don't succumb to their points of view then in their eyes you are an infidel and are worthy of death. Stay clear of

these people. They are venomous and dangerous.

Here are the lyrics to *Stop The Hate* that came out about a year ago.

Stop the hate. It's not too late. We can't wait any longer to stop the hate. Start to love. Look up higher than ourselves to God above. Stop the hurt. It won't work. Stop the hate. We all bleed. We all need, help from each other to survive. It's past time, to stop the hate. We all need some peace of mind and we know it's way past time, to stop the hate.

Stop the hate. It's not too late. We can't wait any longer to stop the hate. It's past time, to stop the hate.

We don't all have to agree on everything. If and when we do disagree, can we please agree not to hate each other? Love is the greatest of all.

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El Pasoan Omar Arellano named SAC of DEA El Paso

By Carlos A. Briano
Special to the Courier

EL PASO COUNTY – For the first time in its history, the Drug Enforcement Administration’s (DEA) El Paso Division will be led by an El Pasoan., who graduated from Del Valle High and the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP), is the new Special Agent in Charge (SAC) of the DEA’s El Paso Division, which serves the entire state of New Mexico and 17 counties of West Texas. Arellano, who reported to El Paso on Monday March 10, is the eleventh SAC to lead the DEA El Paso Division.

“It is a great honor to come home and lead one of the great divisions of the DEA,” Arellano said. “The men and women who work in this region are excellent, and I look forward to working with them again in this new role.”

Arellano began his DEA career in the El Paso Division back in 2003. For 22 years, he’s served DEA in several roles, including agent at the Mexico City Country Office, Resident Agent in Charge of the Ciudad Juarez Resident Office, Supervisory Agent at the Dallas Division, and Executive Assistant to the Director of the El Paso Intelligence Center. As a member of the Financial Investigations Section at DEA Headquarters, he developed expertise in directing and managing complex international money laundering investigations.

Arellano also served as Assistant Special

Agent in Charge (ASAC) of the Bogota, Colombia office. While serving as ASAC in Colombia, he was tasked to serve as Acting SAC for the Andean Division, which has oversight of DEA operations in Colombia and Ecuador.

Prior to becoming the El Paso Division SAC, he served as the Chief of Foreign Operations. In that role, he was DEA’s expert on foreign drug issues and operations around the world and oversaw DEA’s global drug enforcement efforts in 91 foreign offices located in 68 countries. Joint investigations initiated by Arellano with host nation officials and other U.S. government agencies have resulted in the arrests of several leaders of Mexican and Colombian cartels.

Arellano holds a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology from UTEP. He is married to an El Pasoan and has two adult children.



Omar Arellano

– Photo courtesy El Paso DEA

King Crossword

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Average Solve Time 25 Minutes

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- 4 500 sheets
- 8 Nursery cry
- 12 _de-France
- 13 "Prometheus" actor Idris
- 14 Tehran's country
- 15 Pottery
- 17 Dweeb
- 18 Ecol. watchdog
- 19 Church meetings
- 21 Mellow yellows
- 24 Calendar abbr.
- 25 Train unit
- 26 Actress Cattrall

- 28 Rural buildings
- 32 Pharmaceutical
- 34 Crosses (out)
- 36 Cranny
- 37 "The Stranger" author
- 39 Drone
- 41 Roman 1006
- 42 Judge in 1995 news
- 44 Polite denial
- 46 Height
- 50 Sunbather's goal
- 51 Part of N.B.
- 52 Mob bully
- 56 Composer Stravinsky
- 57 Baltic feeder
- 58 Big bird
- 59 Brady and Hanks
- 60 Scatters seeds

61 Filch

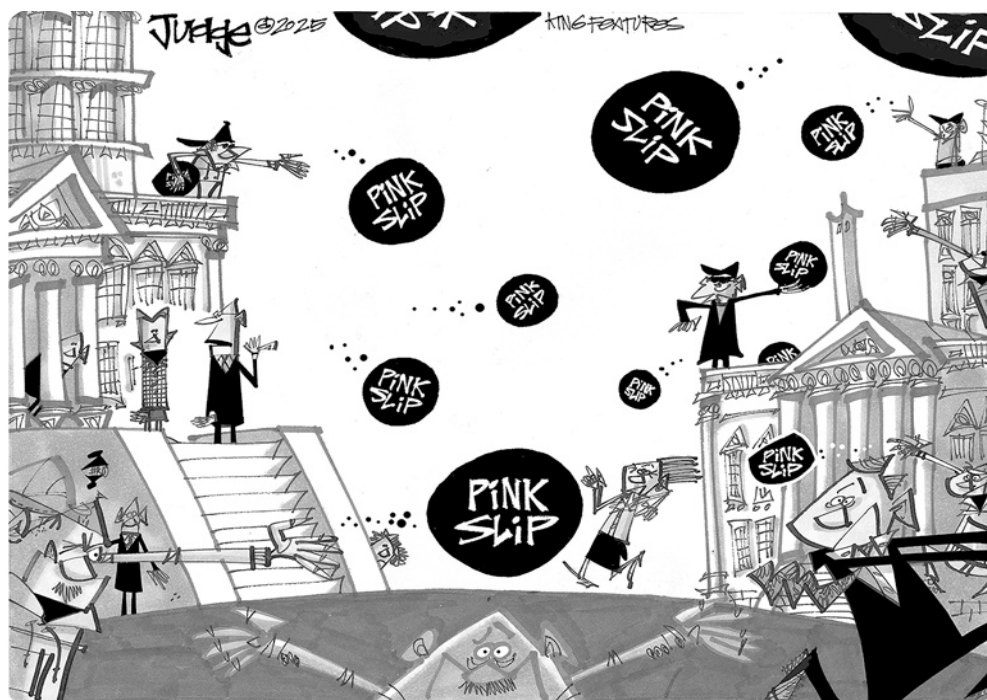
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- 4 Comment
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- 6 Grade-school basics
- 7 Brick worker
- 8 SUV's kin
- 9 Location
- 10 Crumbly earth
- 11 Common conjunctions
- 16 Mimic
- 20 Male swan
- 21 Outlet letters
- 22 Actress Kate
- 23 Half dozen
- 27 "Whatever"
- 29 Lothario
- 30 PBS science show
- 31 Nonfat
- 33 Fender instruments
- 35 Heat source
- 38 "Rugrats" dad
- 40 Engines
- 43 Two-tone cookies
- 45 Scratch
- 46 Tizzy
- 47 Takeout request
- 48 Physics bit
- 49 Within (Pref.)
- 53 Hardly any
- 54 Punk-rock subgenre
- 55 Massage

Answer Page 4



WHAT GOOD IS CHINA'S AI PLATFORM IF IT CAN'T BE HONEST?



"DOGE BALL."



Texas Senate Bill 569 moves to House

Bill aims to expand virtual learning in Texas

By Sarah Leon
Special to the Courier

TEXAS – On March 13, with bipartisan support, Senator Paul Bettencourt (R-Houston) advanced Senate Bill 569 (SB 569) through the Texas Senate. This marks a critical step in expanding access to high quality virtual and hybrid learning for Texas students. SB 569 builds on previous virtual learning reforms and incorporates key recommendations from the 2022 Texas Commission on

Virtual Education. SB 569 has now been sent to the Texas House where Rep. Keith Bell is the House Sponsor.

“We’re going to dramatically increase the scores for these 51,884 students already enrolled, and expect over 100,000 students to benefit when the bill is finally passed into law and signed by Governor Abbott”, said Bettencourt. “This bill empowers students, parents, and teachers with the tools for success,” he added.

Key Features of SB 569 that guarantee this success:

- SB 659 delivers more access to advanced coursework. It allows students to enroll in up to three individual virtual Advanced Placement (AP) courses, dual-credit courses, and specialized electives that may not be available at their local school.

- It provides faster pathways to graduation and college readiness. SB 659 gives students more flexible time to pursue work based learning like apprenticeships, early graduation, and access to college credits while in high

school, reducing time and costs of earning a degree.

- SB 659 enables high school students to earn an Associate Degree. Students can complete up to two years of college coursework while in high school through virtual course offerings and dual-enrollment opportunities.

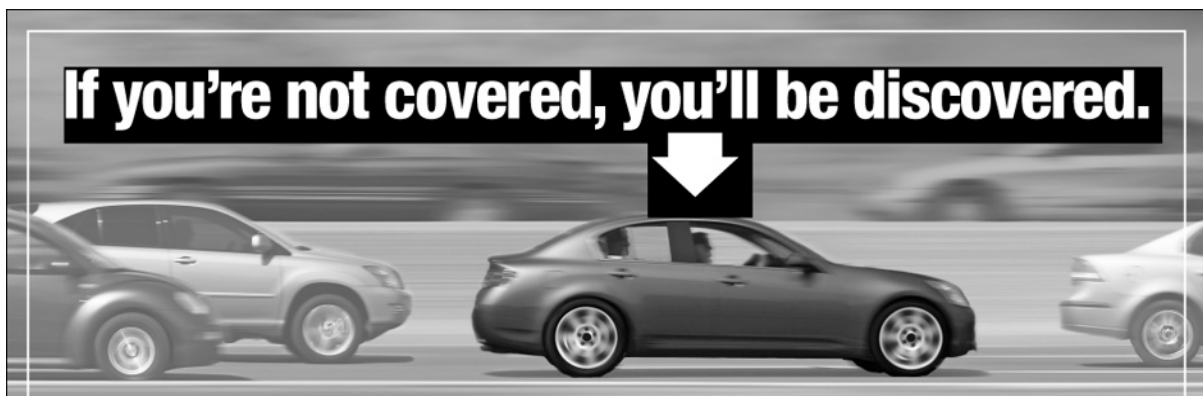
- It maintains families’ choices and teachers’ rights. SB 659 prevents school districts from requiring virtual enrollment and from forcing in-person teachers to teach virtual classes without proper training or consent.

- SB 659 creates clear standards and accountability measures to uphold quality

curriculum for virtual education providers.

“The bill modernizes Texas’ approach to digital learning and responds effectively to increasing demands for flexible learning options. Customizing learning options to meet unique needs is a good thing for all Texas kids and families. There is a cohort of students that can flourish in the virtual and hybrid courses, programs, and campuses,” Bettencourt concluded.

The bill now moves through the Texas House of Representatives to be heard for consideration, first stop will be heard in the Public Education Committee.



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TexasSure catches drivers without insurance.

Poppies

From Page 1

ask attendees not to pick the poppies.

Already held were the March 8th events that showcased local Native American performances and activities by tribal members of the Ysleta del Sur Pueblo and delegations from Santa Fe and Acoma Pueblo, New Mexico.

Also completed were the March 15th activities that offered all things El Paso including local vendors, food trucks, art and music.

Musical guests were Rebecca Samaniego, the Pie Sisters, and Ceiba. Art activities were a digital photography workshop by Kyran Adams,

painting demonstrations by Ms. Gina, project mariposa with frontier arts and education collaborative, and local artist Francisco Delgado. Also held were a Cacao demonstration by Cacao Coyatoc and La Frontera Print Fest Art installation by Skuishi Press & Art Masters.

The Saturday events are free and open to the public. The hub for the annual celebration is the Museum of Archaeology, which is located at 4301 Transmountain in Northeast El Paso.

Interested individuals may visit the El Paso Museum of Archaeology website, at www.EPMA.org for more information about the Poppies Fest.



CLASSIFIED AD FORM

25 words - \$15 per week; 40 words - \$20 per week

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CryptoQuip Answer

If a very tall Lego structure is toppling over, I suppose folks may encounter stumbling blocks.

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1 + 2 + 8 = 11

+ x +

4 + 5 ÷ 9 = 1

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Strange BUT TRUE

By Lucie Winborne

- A Spanish civil servant went unnoticed for six years after he stopped showing up for work until someone tried to give him an award for his long service.
- The Spangler Candy Company named their famous lollipops "Dum Dums" because it was a word that was easy for any kid to say.
- In the 1960s, the Goodyear tire company tested the bright idea of lighted tires, to be available in a range of colors. They looked pretty cool in the dark, but their unfortunate tendency to melt under heavy braking and poor performance in wet conditions doomed the concept to the dustbin.
- A 2016 study revealed that only 27% of the words spoken in the biggest movies were uttered by women.
- National Donut Day originally started as a way to honor Salvation Army volunteers who served donuts to soldiers in World War I.
- When a man allegedly found a dead mouse in his can of Mountain Dew, Pepsi had an expert claim in an affidavit that the drink was so acidic it would have dissolved the mouse after 30 days.

- The Hubble Space Telescope is so powerful that it can spot the glow of a firefly from some 7,000 miles away.
- Professional wrestler and mixed martial arts champion Ronda Rousey confessed on the "Jim Rome on Showtime" TV show that she tries to have as much sex as possible before a match because it boosts her testosterone levels.
- During his inauguration, Teddy Roosevelt wore a ring that contained a lock of Abraham Lincoln's hair.
- The mayor of Bogotá, Colombia, once hired 420 mimes to make fun of traffic violators, believing his fellow countrymen feared ridicule more than fines.
- General George S. Patton believed he was reincarnated from either a military leader from Napoleon's army or a Roman legionary, claiming to have seen combat multiple times in previous lives, and also believed that after he died he would return to again lead armies onto the battlefield.
- It takes somewhere between 144 and 411 licks to reach the center of a Tootsie Pop.
- In Israel, the movie title "Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs" was translated as "It's Raining Falafel."
- Aristotle believed that plants had souls.

- In medieval times, the word "abracadabra" was written out in the shape of a triangle and worn around the neck in an amulet to prevent deadly diseases.
 - A statement in the end credits of the movie "Frozen" claims that Disney does not support the consumption of boogers.
 - Cellophane, invented in 1908, was originally intended to protect tablecloths from wine spills.
 - Those old witch potions aren't quite as gross as you think: Eye of newt, toe of frog and wool of bat are actually archaic terms for mustard seed, buttercup and holly leaves.
 - Selfies now cause more deaths than shark attacks.
 - Scientists can deduce information about a person's lifestyle, including their grooming products, food and medications, from the chemicals found on the surface of their mobile phone.
 - Doc Martens come in all different colors and sizes now, but the first pair was created using old tires.
- Thought for the Day: "My best friend is the one who brings out the best in me."
 – Henry Ford

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Moments in time

THE HISTORY CHANNEL

- On March 17, 1905, future president Franklin Delano Roosevelt married Eleanor Roosevelt, his fifth cousin once removed, in New York. Former President Theodore Roosevelt gave away the bride.
- On March 18, 1911, composer Irving Berlin obtained the copyright for "Alexander's Ragtime Band," a multimillion-selling hit that helped turn American popular music into a major international phenomenon.
- On March 19, 1957, Elvis Presley arranged to purchase the Colonial mansion on the outskirts of Memphis called Graceland for \$102,500, with a cash deposit of \$1,000. It is still preserved exactly as Elvis left it when he died in 1977 and is one of America's most popular tourist attractions – the second-most-visited house in the nation after the White House.
- On March 20, 1345, according to scholars at the University of Paris, the Black Death, aka the Plague, was created from "a triple conjunction of Saturn, Jupiter and Mars in the 40th degree of Aquarius," though it was actually carried by fleas that typically traveled on rats. It cut a swath across Europe, the Middle East and Asia during

- the 14th century, leaving an estimated 25 million dead in its wake, and popped up periodically until the 1700s, but never again reached epidemic proportions.
- On March 21, 1980, President Jimmy Carter announced that the U.S. would boycott the Olympic Games scheduled to take place in Moscow that summer, after the Soviet Union failed to comply with his Feb. 20, 1980, deadline to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan. Four years later, in retaliation, the Soviet Union boycotted the 1984 Olympic Games held in Los Angeles.
- On March 22, 1983, the Pentagon awarded a production contract worth more than \$1 billion to AM General Corp. for the development of 55,000 high mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicles. Nicknamed the Humvee and designed to transport troops and cargo, the vehicles were used by the American military during the 1989 invasion of Panama and the Persian Gulf War in the early 1990s.
- On March 23, 1839, the initials "O.K." were first published in The Boston Morning Post. An abbreviation for "oll korrekt," a popular slang misspelling of "all correct" at the time, OK steadily made its way into the American vernacular.

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WHEN THEY'RE TUNING YOU OUT.

NEVER GIVE UP
UNTIL THEY BUCKLE UP.



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Comix

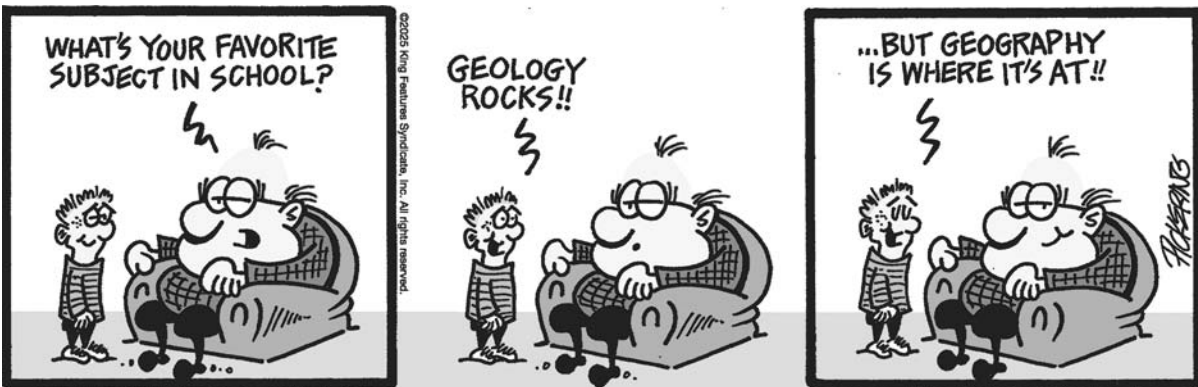
OUT ON A LIMB By Gary Kopervas



AMBER WAVES By Dave T. Phipps



THE SPATS By Jeff Pickering



TIGER By Bud Blake



Lowry

From Page 2

U.S.-Canadian negotiations. Whatever else you think of Canada's dairy policy, it isn't an emergency as contemplated under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act that Trump is using as the legal basis for his tariff threats. Such an emergency would be Canada, say, launching an amphibious invasion of the upper peninsula of Michigan.

If nothing else, President Trump is succeeding in deranging Canadian politics. It's not just the possibility of ruinous tariffs, but the talk of Canada as the 51st state, a somewhat amusing joke that – as Trump keeps talking about it – now has to be considered half-serious.

This is disrespectful at best and threatening at worst. Why should we care? This continuing idea does nothing but provoke Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney.

Trump has suggested that he believes he can use economic coercion to induce Canada to submit to annexation. The opposite is likely true; the more we troll Canada and disrupt its

economy, the greater the anti-U.S. reaction.

Trump should take as a win greater Canadian efforts against fentanyl and on the border (although these aren't hugely consequential), while kicking complaints about Canada trade practices to next year when the USMCA is scheduled to come up for review anyway.

At the top of our list with Canada should be pushing it to spend more on its military. As part of that, we should seek to deepen what is already an incredibly close defense relationship – with a particular focus on securing our interests in the Arctic – rather than foundering on gratuitous enmity.

John F. Kennedy said of Canada: "Geography has made us neighbors. History has made us friends. Economics has made us partners. And necessity has made us allies. Those whom nature hath so joined together, let no man put asunder."

The man in the Oval Office, unfortunately, has a different idea.

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

Bird flu usually found in larger, edible birds

DEAR DR. ROACH: I have two bird feeders off my back deck. They hang from tall poles as a vain attempt to keep squirrels from eating all of the birdseed! But to refill them, I must take them down and handle them, and I recently wondered if I might be exposing myself to the new bird flu. Is there any information about this possibility? Any possible transmission of the virus might have occurred to other bird lovers, too. – J.F.



The songbirds you are attracting to your feeders, such as cardinals, sparrows and woodpeckers, are not likely to be infected with avian influenza ("bird flu"). It generally infects waterfowl such as gulls and ducks.

Most experts do not recommend taking down your feeders but do recommend a periodic cleaning of feeders and baths with a diluted bleach (10%) solution. You should wash your hands after refilling your feeders.

Those who keep poultry such as chickens, ducks, geese or turkeys (which may also be infected by bird flu) should not use feeders or baths that attract wild birds.

DEAR DR. ROACH: I see commercials about different kinds of pillows, asserting that they are better for you medically in various ways, especially with enhancing your sleep experience. This implies to me that conventional pillows can be bad for you. Is any of this true? – W.R.G.

No, I wouldn't say that conventional pillows are bad for you. However, there is evidence that in people with chronic neck pain, pillows made with latex or springs have been shown to reduce neck pain, waking symptoms and disability. They also enhance the satisfaction that people have with their pillows, but studies taken as an aggregate did not show an improvement in sleep quality. It seems that the height and composition of the pillow can affect the alignment of your neck bones.

If you aren't having any problems, there is no reason to change. But if you wake up with a sore neck or have chronic neck pain, a special pillow might help, although I doubt there is one pillow that is right for everybody.

DEAR DR. ROACH: Is it OK for an 80-year-old male who has abused alcohol for many years (6-8 drinks per evening) to stop drinking cold turkey? I have not slept in 48 hours! – R.B.

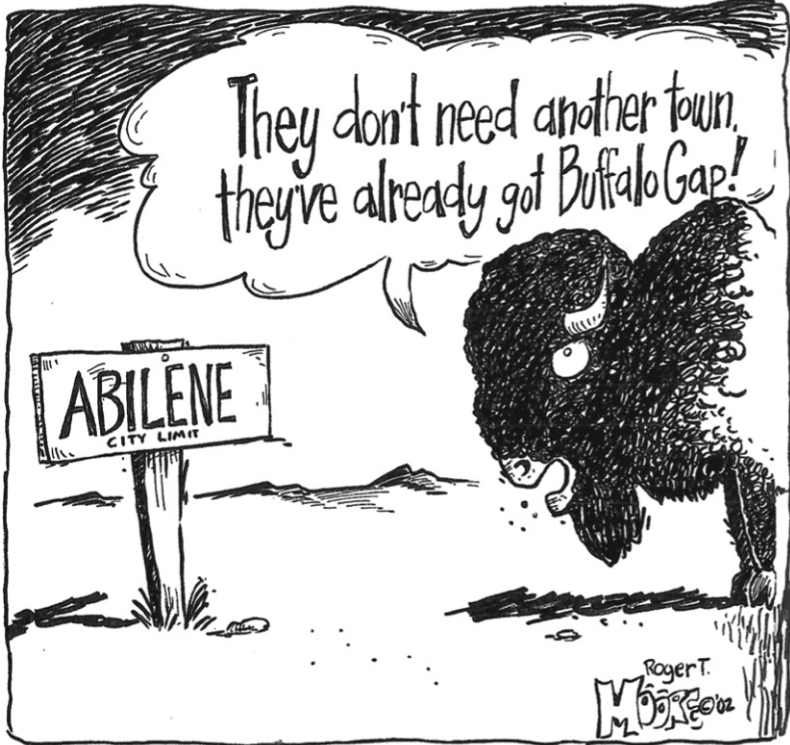
No, it's not OK. It's very unsafe for anyone to stop drinking so much so quickly, especially an older adult. What you should have done is gotten in contact with your regular physician who can determine if it is safe for you to stop alcohol at home, or whether you need to be in a more supervised situation (such as a person with heart problems or those with a history of severe alcohol withdrawal in the past).

If it is safe for you to do so at home, medication to help prevent withdrawal symptoms may be given. An expert in addiction medicine has more experience than nearly all generalists, so your regular physician may recommend that you see an expert. Given your symptoms, you should see someone right away, whether they're your own doctor or an emergency physician, as you are at risk for moderate or severe withdrawal.

I congratulate you on wanting to stop alcohol after many years, but getting some help will make stopping safer and make quitting for good more likely.

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. ©2025 North America Synd., Inc. All Rights Reserved.

Archives: www.wtxcc.com



Moore Texas by Roger Moore

March 15, 1881: Abilene is born with the completion of the Texas & Pacific RR.

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: A equals G

MW Q B G S L Y Q E E E G A H
 D Y S V R Y V S G M D Y H C C E M T A
 H B G S , M D V C C H D G W H E X D U Q L
 G T R H V T Y G S Y V U N E M T A N E H R X D .

Answer Page 4

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Weekly SUDOKU

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

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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Holes in the fiduciary program



by Freddy Groves

The Department of Veterans Affairs' Fiduciary Program is set up to help veterans take care of their finances and benefits if they can't handle it themselves because they're sick, injured or elderly. There is a lot of money at stake: \$2.7 billion in a recent year. Each of the hundred thousand veterans who fall in the category of needing assistance are assigned a fiduciary, someone who protects the veterans and their finances.

The VA's Pension and Fiduciary Service, which manages the fiduciaries, is tasked with ensuring the proper handling of veterans' affairs through in-person examinations, fiduciary accountings and investigations into misuse. All goes well with this arrangement... until it doesn't.

A recent VA Office of Inspector General report details what they found

when they investigated the Fiduciary Program.

Over 300 veterans and their financial affairs were not being monitored or supervised by the Fiduciary Program for three years and in some cases longer. The hole in the system was because the program had no way to identify veterans who were in need of fiduciary services or because their records did not move from one system to the other, the Veterans Benefits Management System-Fiduciary (VBMS-Fid), after need was determined.

Which left a whole lot of money out there without oversight: in excess of \$24 million.

A fiduciary is required to submit written reports about how the veteran's money is being spent, and those reports are reviewed by program staff. In the event there's a question, the fiduciary must clear it up. Failure to do that constitutes misuse, and an investigation is supposed to follow.

If you are a veteran who has a fiduciary managing your benefits and if you suspect

that person is not acting in your best interests, let the VA know. Call them at (800) 827-1000 to report possible fraud and misuse of your benefits. Or call the VAOIG hotline at (800) 488-8244 to make a complaint. For a flyer about the VAOIG's crime alert, put "Protect Vulnerable Veterans from Fiduciary Theft" in a search box online.

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- My family's spring-cleaning checklist is in full effect. Some people dread seasonal chores, but I relish the sense of accomplishment that comes from a job well done. With the right planning, and some helpful tips, spring-cleaning can be a breeze. Here are some of the best we have to share.

- "Stainless steel appliances are very popular, and in the kitchen, they get plenty of chances to get fingerprinted up. My appliance guy recommended using a light-mist, wax-based aerosol dusting spray once or twice a week to keep my stainless steel appliance fronts looking their best." – R.C. in North Carolina

- In the closet, we all want to pare away unused items, but sometimes it seems like you wear clothes that you don't. Turn all the clothes hangers the opposite way (facing out instead of in). When you use an item and it is returned to the closet, replace the hanger normally. In a few months, if an item has not been worn, it'll be apparent. If it's not likely to be worn, it should go.

- New drapes or even new pillow covers in a fabulous pattern can really jazz up a room. Consider switching smaller furniture accents between common rooms or a fresh furniture arrangement to change it up.

- Keep a bottle of club soda handy for spot stains on carpets or upholstery. It's good for more than just drinks.

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

GO FIGURE!

The idea of Go Figure is to arrive at the figures given at the bottom and right-hand columns of the diagram by following the arithmetic signs in the order they are given (that is, from left to right and top to bottom). Use only the numbers below the diagram to complete its blank squares and use each of the nine numbers only once.

DIFFICULTY: ★★

★ Moderate ★★ Difficult

★★★ GO FIGURE!

Answer Page 4

| | | | | | | | | |
|----|---|----|---|----|---|---|----|---|
| | | - | | + | | = | 4 | |
| - | | | + | | + | | | |
| | + | | | + | | = | 11 | |
| + | | | x | | + | | | |
| | + | | | ÷ | | = | 1 | |
| = | | = | | = | | | | |
| 10 | | 40 | | 20 | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |

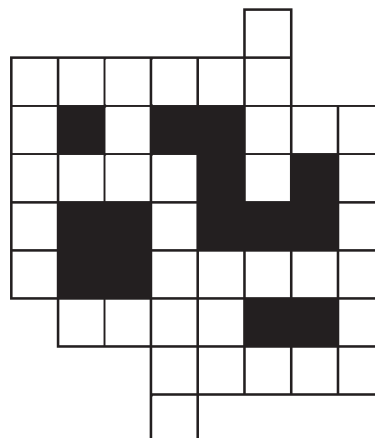
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By: rj johnson

DOUBT? ... OR DARE!

- ICT
- RUBESO
- ♥ EWSTA
- ORZE
- KANEWA
- MIA
- NIAT
- COTRA
- ♥ WNO
- TRECPA
- PINZU
- OBTM



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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