



Controversy over SB 4, immigration, continues

By Alfredo Vasquez
Special to the Courier

EL PASO COUNTY – No, law enforcement officers – whether local, county, or state – may not stop an individual on the street or in a car and question his or her immigration status. It is not within their jurisdiction as outlined in the U.S. Constitution.

This is what a federal appeals court recently ruled after siding with El Paso County leaders and immigration rights activists. The ruling upheld a lower court’s decision to temporarily stop Senate Bill 4 (SB 4), a controversial Texas state law that would authorize local police officers to arrest and deport undocumented immigrants.

The U.S. Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals issued the judgement in July and reaffirmed Senior U.S. District Judge David Alan Ezra’s original February 2024 decision which issued the preliminary injunction and for now prevents the law from taking effect.

The justices in a 2-1 ruling stated that Texas leaders did not have the authority to enforce immigration laws. Justices Priscilla Richman and Irma Carrillo Ramirez voted to uphold the injunction. Justice Andrew Stephen Oldham was the dissenting vote.

“For nearly 150 years, the Supreme Court has recognized that the power to control immigration – the entry, admission, and removal of aliens – is exclusively a federal power,” the ruling stated. The justices added that SB 4’s provisions “rob every [presidential] administration of the very discretion in alien removal matters that Congress granted to the federal executive and not to the States.”

The ruling is part of a two-year legal battle between Texas leaders and the U.S. Department of Justice (under the Biden Administration), El Paso County, El Paso’s Las Americas Immigrant Advocacy, and American Gateways. SB 4 was approved by Texas legislators in 2023 and scheduled to take effect in March of 2024. Ezra issued the

Texas Senate Bill 4 (SB 4) and similar laws across the country have been repeatedly blocked by courts, as similar laws in Florida, Oklahoma, Idaho, and Iowa have all been defeated in court.

– American Civil Liberties Union

STAAR to be replaced with new testing for school accountability

By Sarah Leon
Special to the Courier

TEXAS – In the final days of the 89th 2nd Called Special Session, the Texas House gave final passage to House Bill 8 (HB 8) with a key Senate amendment to restore the critical 8th grade social studies test and US History end of course exam. HB 8, authored by House Public Education Chair Rep. Brad Buckley (R–Salado) and sponsored in the Senate by Sen. Paul Bettencourt (R–Houston) is a priority bill of Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick and Speaker Dustin Burrows, and now heads to Governor

Abbott’s desk. The bill eliminates the STAAR test and replaces it with three shorter supportive assessments while restoring annual A–F public school accountability ratings and protecting taxpayers from lawfare against the state’s accountability system.

“Chair Brad Buckley’s leadership was so important to the bill’s passage,” remarked Sen. Bettencourt. “What gets measured gets fixed, and HB 8 measures what matters, student success,” Bettencourt adds. “HB 8 will restore classroom time, end wasteful lawsuits, and prepare Texas students for real-world achievement. And tests on History are important too!”

The bill follows a 2nd major legal victory for the state’s A–F system when the 15th Court of Appeals unanimously ruled to release the 2023–2024 ratings, defeating ongoing “lawfare” from plaintiff ISD’s who challenged it. HB 8 ensures that “lawfare” cannot undermine academic accountability again.

Key Reforms in HB 8:

- STAAR replaced by 3 shorter tests (Beginning-, Middle-, End-of-Year) starting in 2027-28.

- Fast results: teacher and parent feedback in 48 hours, raw scores 2 days upon completion

- Limits overtesting: benchmark

testing capped to return classroom time to teachers.

- Annual A–F ratings required; “Not Rated” designations banned.

- Protects Taxpayers: prohibits frivolous lawsuits against Pub. Ed. accountability measures.

- Top 5 goal: refreshes cut scores every 5 years to place Texas among top states in 15 years.

House Public Education Chair Rep. Brad Buckley on Bettencourt’s leadership on HB 8:

“HB 8 delivers real insight for teachers and parents and shifts

See TESTING, Page 5



– Photo courtesy of El Paso County

LEAVE IT TO THE FEDS – El Paso County Commissioners Court members continue to urge the courts to uphold the protections guaranteed by the Constitution and reject Texas Senate Bill 4, which they say undermines local law enforcement and creates unfunded mandates for counties to handle federal immigration matters. El Paso County Commissioners are, from left, Jackie Butler, Precinct 1; David Stout, Precinct 2; Ricardo Samaniego, County Judge; Illiana Holguin, Precinct 3; and Segio Coronado, Precinct 4.

injunction in February 2024.

If enacted, SB 4 would have given state and local law enforcement authorities the power to arrest people believed to have illegally entered Texas by crossing the state’s southern border. The people arrested would have their cases heard by a magistrate judge, who could order them to return to their country of origin or face criminal prosecution.

Immigration advocates, however, worry that the law’s implementation would lead to racial profiling, separating families, and harming immigrant communities across the state. Racial

profiling is the practice of a law enforcement officials or other authorities who suspect an individuals of wrongdoing based on their race, ethnicity, or national origin, rather than on their behavior or objective evidence. This practice relies on stereotypes and prejudice, which leads to discriminatory treatment and disproportionate surveillance of targeted racial groups.

In a public statement, Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton declared that the appeals court justices were attacking freedom and the U.S. Constitution. “In 2023, the Texas Legislature passed Senate Bill 4, which authorizes Texas law enforcement to arrest those who break our laws by crossing the Mexican border illegally. This law helps prevent dangerous

See IMMIGRATION, Page 5

Trump is wrong about mail-in voting

President Trump is threatening to wage war on mail-in ballots, and the GOP has to hope he thinks again before the 2026 midterms.

In a Truth Social post, Trump said he is “going to lead a movement to get rid of MAIL-IN BALLOTS,” and he’ll start off with “an EXECUTIVE ORDER to help bring HONESTY to the 2026 midterm elections.”

Trump likes the idea of in-person, same-day voting, which has much to recommend it, but mail-in and early voting are so ingrained and widespread that they aren’t going anywhere.

Most Republicans have concluded that there’s no alternative to making use of these modes of voting, and, crucially, they managed—most of the time—to get Trump on board in 2024. This aided the Republican get-out-the-vote operation in a close election.

Clearly, though, Trump believes that mail-in voting is a Democratic plot, and he also hates contemporary voting machines.

Old-school paper ballots don’t guarantee honesty, however. In an infamous instance of voter fraud, allies of Lyndon Johnson stuffed Box 13 with enough ballots to put him over the top in the very narrow 1948 Democratic Senate primary in Texas. Today’s voting machines, moreover, were a reaction to the Florida fiasco in 2000, when punch-card ballots had to be painstakingly examined by hand with a presidential election at stake.


The fact is that vote-by-mail has been steadily growing since the 1980s, and it needn’t favor one side or the other.

In Florida, Republicans long made it a priority

to maximize mail voting.

A study by the academic Andrew Hall of pre-COVID-19 voting patterns in California, Utah and Washington found a negligible partisan effect as those states rolled out vote-by-mail systems. Overall, turnout went up only very slightly, and “the Democratic share of turnout did not increase appreciably.”

Mail-in voting didn’t change who was voting but how they did it—encouraging, as you might expect, voting by mail rather than in-person. Vote



THE RICH LOWRY COLUMN

See LOWRY, Page 7

Food for thought By Dr. Glenn Mollette

Do it while you can

Do it while you can, while you feel like it.

The chances of you doing something now are greater than ten years from now. First, you may not be here ten years from now. If there is a career change you want to make then make it as soon as possible. The sooner the better. If there is education or training you are thinking about pursuing then begin now. The longer you wait to start the longer it will take to finish.

The younger you begin a career the better the chance you have of it being better, bigger and greater. The young people who take off to New York City, Hollywood or Nashville to pursue musical or acting, typically have a better chance of success. It’s easier to catch fish, where there are fish to catch.

People who enter the military

in their early twenties can have a retirement in their forties or they can stay in service even longer if they wish.

The person who begins working at an early age and faithfully saves money every month can have a million dollars or more in their retirement account by the time they are sixty.

The earlier we start the better we do. However, not everyone has the opportunity to start early. This is why you start when you can. Life is different for all of us. We all were raised in different environments. Often, information, mentoring and life coaching were not available. Some had to figure it out on their own. That’s not easy, but we do the best that we can.

The Bible reminds us to “Remember your creator in the days of your youth before the

days of trouble come and the years approach when you will say, ‘I find no pleasure in them’” (Ecclesiastes 12:1) On the heels of this verse is one to keep in mind as well, “Youth and the prime of life are fleeting, but a life lived for God is forever.” (2 Samuel 22:4)

One section of scripture that should be a waving flag to us is Luke 12. A man reaches a state in life where all he can say is “I have so much laid up in store for many years. All I have to do is take it easy, eat drink and be merry.” But God called him a fool and he died that very day and went out into eternity.

Thus, we never know when our time will end. Therefore, take your vacation sooner rather than later. Enjoy what you can see, hear and do today. Love on the significant people in your life today. Do the good deed today. Do what you want to do. Do what you can do and do good things, whatever that may mean or look like to you.

Help those you can, but there is only so much you can do. You are one person and you can’t save the world. Don’t live your life in such a way that you end up saying, “I wish I had done this. I wish I had done that.”

We all deal with being good stewards of our time and minds. It’s not easy but why not start today?

Glenn Mollette is a graduate of numerous schools including Georgetown College, Southern and Lexington Seminaries in Kentucky. He is the author of “Uncommon Sense” and 12 other books. His column is published weekly in over 600 publications in all 50 states. Learn more at www.glennmollette.com or www.facebook.com/glennmollette.



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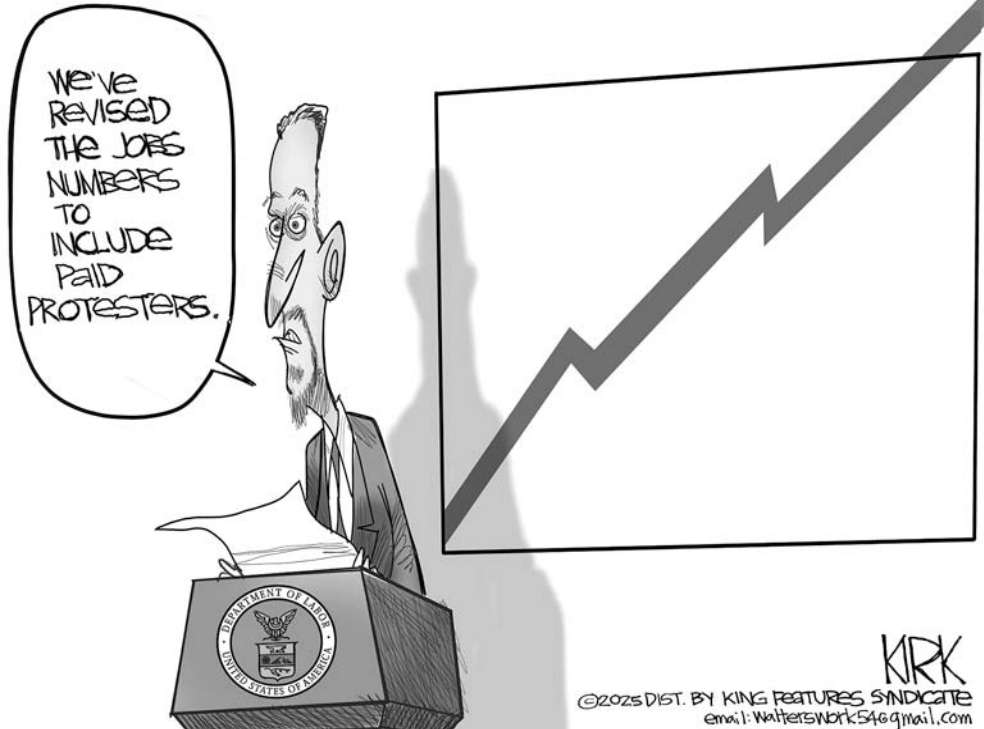
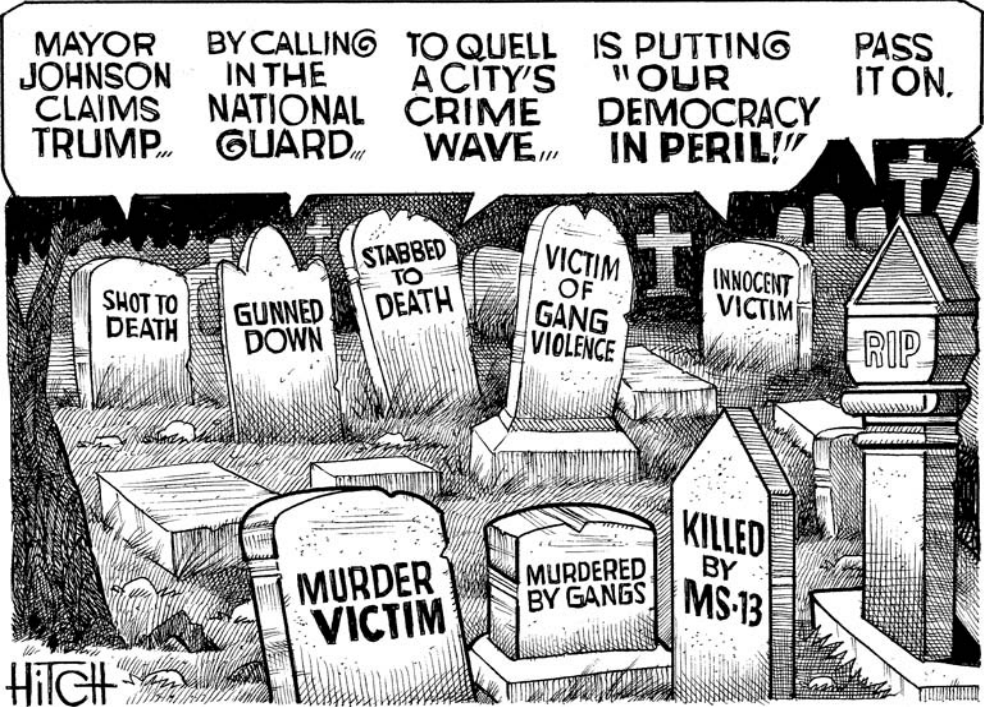
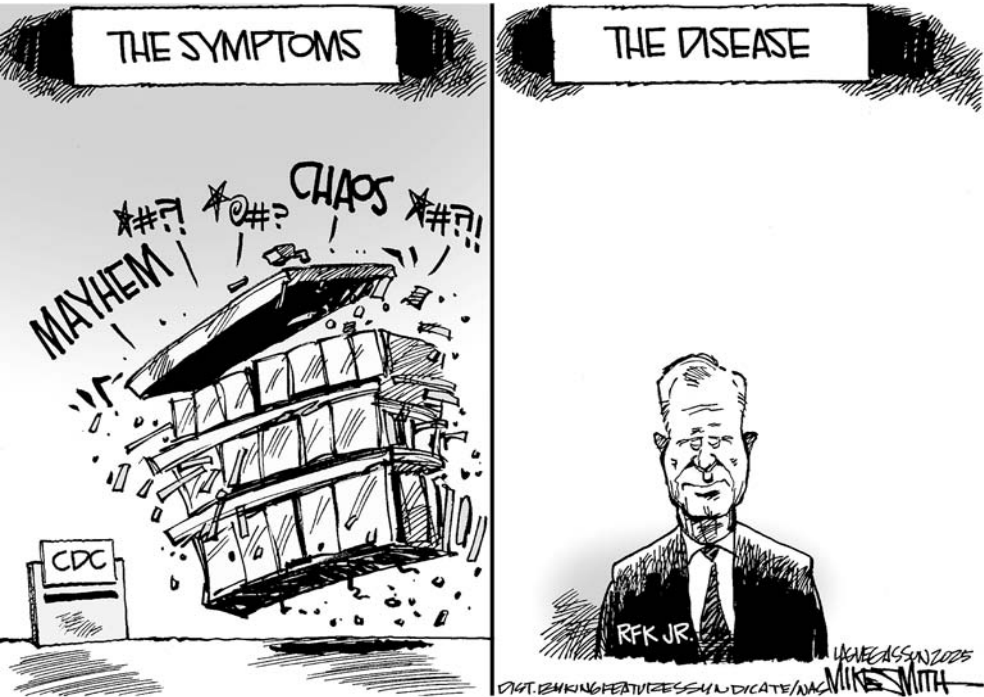
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El Paso County Water Control and Improvement District No. 4

Notice of Public Hearing on Tax Rate

The EL PASO COUNTY WCID NO. 4 will hold a public hearing on a proposed tax rate for the tax year 2025 on September 23, 2025 at 5:30 PM at 117 E. Main Fabens, Texas 79838. Your individual taxes may increase at a greater or lesser rate, or even decrease, depending on the tax rate that is adopted and on the change in the taxable value of your property in relation to the change in taxable value of all other property. The change in the taxable value of your property in relation to the change in the taxable value of all other property determines the distribution of the tax burden among all property owners.

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

- FOR the proposal:

Juana Gutierrez
Ana M. Sanchez

Samuel Madrid
Jorge Carrasco, Jr
- AGAINST the proposal:

Martin Madrid
- PRESENT and not voting:

NONE
- ABSENT:

NONE

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

	Last Year	This Year
	Adopted	Proposed
Total tax rate (per \$100 value)	\$0.133970/\$100	\$0.315268/\$100
Difference in rates per \$100 of value		+ \$0.181298
Percentage increase / decrease in rates (+/–)		+ 135.33%
Average residence homestead appraised value	\$ 111,871	\$ 120,999
General exemptions available (excluding 65 years of age or older or disabled person’s exemptions)	\$ 0	\$ 0
Average residence homestead taxable value	\$ 111,871	\$ 120,999
Tax on average residence homestead	\$ 149.87	\$ 381.47
Annual increase / decrease in taxes if proposed tax rate is adopted (+/–)		+ \$ 231.60
and percentage of increase (+/–)		+ 154.53%

If the proposed combined debt service, operation and maintenance, and contract tax rate requires or authorizes an election to approve or reduce the tax rate the governing body of EL PASO COUNTY WCID NO. 4 proposes to use the tax increase for the purpose of funding capital improvement projects.

NOTICE OF VOTE ON TAX RATE

If the district adopts a combined debt service, operation and maintenance and contract tax rate that would result in the taxes on the average residence homestead increasing by more than 3.5 percent, an election must be held to determine whether to approve the operation and maintenance tax rate under Section 49.23602, Water Code. An election is not required if the adopted tax rate is less than or equal to the voter-approval tax rate.

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

2025 EPSO season opens September 19 and 20

2025 Van Cliburn Gold Medalist, Aristo Sham, featured performer



— Photo by Lisa-Marie Mazzucco / The Cliburn
GOLDEN – 2025 Van Cliburn International winner Aristo Sham.

By Rosemary Flores
Special to the Courier

EL PASO – El Paso Symphony Orchestra’s 2025-2026 classical series will kick off at 7:30 p.m. on September 19 and 20 at the Plaza Theatre. Gold medal winner of the 2025 Van Cliburn International Piano Competition, 29-year-old Aristo Sham, will join the EPSO for Grieg’s Piano Concerto in A minor. Additionally, the El Paso Symphony Orchestra, under the direction of Maestro Rattay, will open with Glinka’s Ruslan and Ludmilla Overture. The concerts will end with Tchaikovsky’s impressive Symphony No. 4. This symphony, often referred to as the “Fate” symphony, is a deeply personal work that reflects the composer’s life experiences and struggles. It explores themes of fate, melancholy, and ultimately finding joy in the midst of adversity.

In 2025, Aristo Sham achieved a breakthrough at the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition, winning both the gold medal and the audience award. Critics lauded his performance, describing him as “a marvel of deft characterization,” “consistently authoritative,” “a card-carrying risk taker,” “a dapper, aristocratic figure on stage,” and a “pianist I look forward to hearing again” (*The Dallas Morning News*, *Gramophone* and *Texas Classical Voice*). Within two months of his victory, Aristo was mentioned in over 800 news articles, and videos of his Cliburn performance were streamed 2 million times across 125 countries. He was featured in the 2009 documentary *The World’s Greatest Musical Prodigies* on Channel 4 (UK) and has had the honor of performing for royalty, including King Charles. Tickets are on sale now and may be purchased at epso.org, ticketmaster.com, or by calling the EPSO office (915) 532-3776.

Strange BUT TRUE

By Lucie Winborne

- The average lipstick has 293 swipes.
- In Missouri, if you are under 21, you can be charged with illegal possession of alcohol without even taking a breathalyzer test if you happen to be found taking out empty alcohol cans and bottles in your trash.
- The first-ever Olympic Games was won by a chef.
- There is a fish (salema porgy) that when eaten causes severe hallucinations lasting up to 36 hours. Perhaps unsurprisingly, it served as a party drug during the Roman Empire.
- Warm and light colors appear closer, while cool and darker colors appear farther away.
- Chloroform was once touted as an asthma cure. Unfortunately, this would eventually result in the deaths of patients who had overdosed during an asthma attack.

- According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, at least 50% of ladder-related accidents involved individuals carrying items while they climbed. Additionally, each year, more than 900,000 people receive emergency room treatment from ladder-related injuries.
- Ninety-five percent of the average car’s lifetime is spent being parked.

- Biologists have found that plants exhibit competitiveness among strangers of the same species, but are more accommodating toward their siblings.
- Left-handed people are more likely to use fountain pens.
- Tsutomu Yamaguchi was one lucky fellow. He was in Hiroshima for work when the first A-bomb hit, made it home to Nagasaki for the second, and lived to be 93.

- The eyes of the celestial eye goldfish are bigger than its stomach.

Thought for the Day: “It may be hard for an egg to turn into a bird: it would be a jolly sight harder for it to learn to fly while remaining an egg. We are like eggs at present. And you cannot go on indefinitely being just an ordinary, decent egg. We must be hatched or go bad.”
– C.S. Lewis

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The *West Texas County Courier* will publish two editions early. The October 9 and 16, 2025 issues will go to press on Tuesday, September 30, 2025.

All material for these publications must be submitted to the *West Texas County Courier* no later than Friday, September 26, 2025.

The *West Texas County Courier* office will close beginning Wednesday, October 1, 2025. The office will open again on Friday, October 17, 2025

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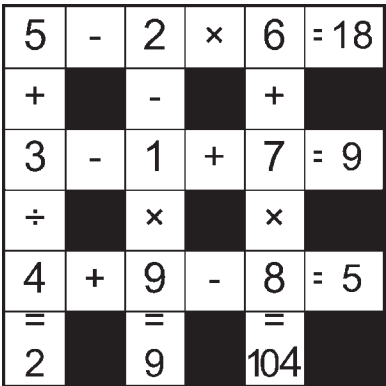
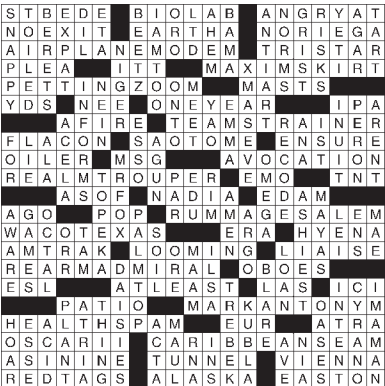
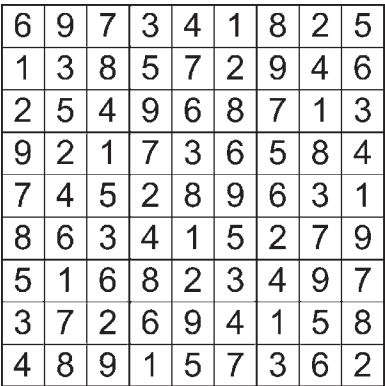
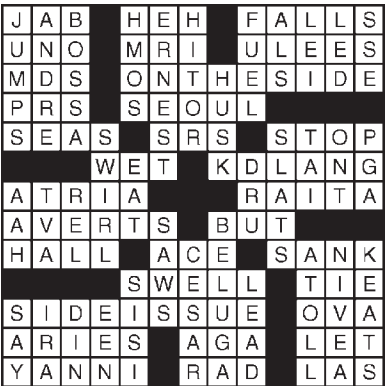


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CryptoQuip Answer

How might one refer to items like jars, bowls forks and colanders?
“Gastronomical objects.”



- On Sept. 8, 2012, a pair of Elvis Presley’s undershorts, which had been framed under glass, failed to sell at a British auction, though they’d been optimistically expected to go for more than \$10,000.
- On Sept. 9, 1942, a Japanese seaplane dropped incendiary bombs near Brookings, Oregon, in the first such attack on the U.S. mainland. The bombs were intended to start a forest fire, but fortunately caused little damage, due to wet conditions. Twenty years later, the pilot, Nobuo Fujita, visited Brookings in a gesture of reconciliation and friendship.
- On Sept. 10, 1920, F. Scott Fitzgerald published his first short story collection, “Flappers and Philosophers.” In a copy he sent to editor and critic H.L. Mencken, Fitzgerald labeled four of the stories “worth reading,” one “amusing” and the remaining three “trash.”
- On Sept. 11, 1841, American portrait painter John Goffe Rand received a patent for the first collapsible tin paint tube. Until then, artists had to mix their own oil paints, storing leftover supplies in animal bladders tied with string. French artist Pierre-Auguste Renoir later declared that “without paints in tubes there would have been no C@zanne, no Monet, no Sisley or Pissarro, nothing of ... Impressionism.”
- On Sept. 12, 1972, cowboy actor William Boyd, best known for his role as Hopalong Cassidy, died at the age of 77. He was the first cowboy actor to make the transition from movies to television, after more than 50 successful B-grade Westerns in which he was accompanied by his faithful and exceptionally intelligent horse, Topper,
- On Sept. 13, 1940, Benito Mussolini’s forces crossed the Libyan border into Egypt, achieving what “Il Duce” described as the glory Italy had been seeking for 300 years.
- On Sept. 14, 1975, Elizabeth Ann Seton (née Bayley), who was raised Episcopalian but later converted to Catholicism after being left a widow with five children, was canonized by Pope Paul VI at the Vatican in Rome, becoming one of the first American-born Catholic saints.

Canutillo School Board adopts lower tax rate for 2025-26 fiscal year

By Gustavo Reveles
Special to the Courier

CANUTILLO – The Canutillo Independent School District Board of Trustees on Wednesday adopted a tax rate for the 2025-26 fiscal year that is lower than last year’s rate.

Trustees approved a total rate of \$1.1525 per \$100 property valuation, about a quarter of a cent less than the 2024-25 rate.

The average homeowner in the district will pay \$1,923.38 in school taxes this year, compared with \$2,108.03 last year. That figure reflects both a nearly \$25,000 increase in average home valuation to \$306,888, and a projected \$40,000 boost in the homestead exemption allowance.

“We are pleased to adopt a tax rate that offers some relief to taxpayers and still meets the needs of our students and employees,” Board President Armando Rodriguez said. “Canutillo, like most districts in Texas, has gone through one of the most difficult budget cycles in its history, yet we continue to look for ways to be good stewards of taxpayer trust while remaining innovative and forward thinking in our student programming.”

The rate approved by the Board includes a Maintenance & Operation (M&O) rate of \$0.7525 and an Interest & Sinking (I&S) rate of \$0.40. The M&O rate funds daily operations, while the I&S rate pays off District debt.

Canutillo’s lower tax rate is the result of fast residential and commercial growth within its boundaries. While the new rate is lower than last year’s, it will generate more revenue than the district collected under the previous rate.

Immigration

From Page 1

criminals from being released into Texas communities.”

El Paso County Attorney Christina Sanchez countered, “As the largest border county in the state of Texas, the county of El Paso has held steadfast in its opposition to this law because the county prioritizes pushing back on unconstitutional actions that seek to bankrupt our community and divert local law enforcement resources away from other priorities.”

Jennifer Babaie, director of Advocacy and Legal Services at El Paso’s Las Americas Immigrant Advocacy Center, said, “As immigration advocates across the state and country have been saying for years, SB 4 is unconstitutional,

out of touch, and dangerous. Even as we write this, baseless and violent attacks against immigrant communities continue. Our communities deserve so much better.”

Texas Civil Rights Project President Rochelle Garza expressed that the ruling proves that no state, not even Texas, has the power to create its own immigration laws. “The court has affirmed decades of precedence making clear that immigration is within the sole dominion of the federal government. SB 4 threatens to upend our Constitution, tear apart our democracy, and oppress our Texas communities through racial profiling,” she added.

A new trial date to argue over the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals injunction has not yet been set, according to court records.

Testing

From Page 1

the emphasis back to real learning. Senator Bettencourt’s tireless work to restore accountability ensures transparency and fairness for students, families, and educators across Texas.”

Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick echoing final passage of

HB 8: “When I was Senate Education Chair for 13 years, I have worked to reduce the burden of STAAR. HB 8, championed by Sen. Bettencourt in the Senate finally replaces it with a system that measures true student growth.”

HB 8 takes effect 91 days after adjournment of the legislative session with full transition in 2027-28.

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- Average Solve Time 26 Minutes**

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1 Poke

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7 Niagara sight

12 Dos preceder

13 X-ray’s cousin

14 “_ Gold” (Fonda film)

15 Rx writers

16 Salad dressing order

18 7, on older phones

19 Capital of South Korea

20 Salty waters

22 Soon-to-be grads

23 Desist
- 27 Drench

29 “Constant Craving” singer

31 Places in the heart

34 Indian yogurt dish

35 Wards off

37 However

38 Corridor

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41 Foundered

45 “Peachy!”

47 Cravat

48 Tangential topic

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53 Zodiac ram

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55 Rent out

56 “Live at the Acropolis” performer

57 “Way cool!”

58 Vegas opener?
- DOWN**

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2 Tennis great

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4 Med. plan options

5 Papa Hemingway

6 _miss

7 Tank filler

8 Gore and Green

9 Floral necklace

10 Guided

11 Compass dir.

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21 Marble cake pattern

23 Bed boards

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25 Toronto’s prov.

26 Links org.

28 Have lunch
- 30 Actress Joanne

31 Sound of relief

32 FDR project

33 Seminary subj.

36 Tools with teeth

37 Whale variety

40 Activist Chavez

42 Coral island

43 Skin care brand

44 “Endymion” poet

45 Spanish ayes

46 Pencil filler

48 Utter

49 Glass of public radio

50 Cacophony

51 Still, in verse

Maybe these Miners will be the real deal

By Steve Escajeda
Special to the Courier

It’s a little unusual and early to label the second game of the season a “must win” game, but that’s exactly what last Saturday’s UTEP game against UT Martin was.

A “must-win” game. After a hard-fought but still disappointing 28-16 loss at Utah State in their opener, these new-and-improved Miners had to prove they were exactly that – new and vastly improved.

A win was critical, especially with next week’s game against the Texas Longhorns at Austin coming up. It was important to send the Sun Bowl fans home happy.

Nobody expects or would even be that upset at the Miners losing to Arch Manning and the Steers, but coming home after the Texas game with an 0-3 record was unacceptable.

And even worse, the fans would stop supporting the team. And why not? After decades of losing football, it’s hard to blame them.

When I watch something on TV that I’m not enjoying, I eventually change the channel.

Well, these Miners definitely are new and improved. They proved it by manhandling the Skyhawks 42-17.

Now some people will say that the Miners were supposed to win because UT Martin is in a lower division than UTEP. (The “T” in UT Martin stands for Tennessee, not Texas).

And that’s true, UTEP was favored to win, but that hasn’t stopped lower-level teams from either beating or scaring the pants off the Miners in the past.

Some examples include last year’s 27-24 loss to Southern Utah, outlasting Bethune-Cookman 38-28 in 2001, just

getting by Stephen F. Austin 24-14 and Abilene Christian 17-14 in 2000, sneaking by Houston Baptist 36-34 in 2019, and then losing to Northern Arizona 30-10 in 2018.

The Miners should be doing to those teams what Texas and Tennessee and Oklahoma and Nebraska do to us.

So, winning convincingly like the Miners did, shows that this is not you daddy’s or granddaddy’s or great-granddaddy’s or great-great-... well, you get the idea, this is a different kind of team.

On Saturday, the Miners took and early 7-0 lead and then there was the lightning delay. A long 40-minute lightning delay. When play resumed, the Skyhawks took advantage of a UTEP turnover and tied the score 7-7 just three minutes later.

Everyone in the stadium, me including, immediately thought, here we go again, it’s going to be the same old Miners.

Sometimes it feels good to be wrong.

UTEP scored the next three touchdowns and took a 28-7 lead into the half.

But it’s not just that they were scoring touchdowns, it’s how they did it; a 48-yard touchdown bomb, a 94-yard run. In the second half they added a 74-yard TD pass. And, though it didn’t go for a touchdown, they added another 64-yard run.

In other words, big exciting plays that get the fans at the game pumped and make other fans at home say they’re going to the next game.

The biggest takeaway from the game is that the Miners have their quarterback. Malachi Nelson, the nation’s top ranked quarterback coming out of high school two years ago, is finally showing what the scouts saw in him.

There were a lot of concerns about him because he didn’t even win the starting spot until a week before the season.

But his nearly 300 yards passing and four touchdowns showed that

he’s finally becoming comfortable in orange and blue.

The defense swarms to the ball, they tackle well and are extremely aggressive. They have also combined for 10 sacks in their first two games of the season.

Coach Scotty Walden promised fast-pace games, big-plays, and aggressiveness while keeping poised. It may have taken him 14 games, but “his” Miners finally showed up.

Unfortunately, college sports are all about money now. If you don’t make enough; you can’t pay enough to get the kind of athletes the other guys are getting.

That’s why this was such a “must win” game for UTEP. The fans have to stay interested to buy tickets. All they want is to support a team that will at least be competitive.

El Paso will show up for a team like that. And this year’s Miners are a team like that.

Too bad your great-great-grandfather isn’t here to watch them.

Senior moment

By Matilda Charles

Stay updated on recalls

In the world of food recalls and alerts, just when you think you’ve seen it all, something even more scary and dangerous comes along.

We’ve had the “normal” stuff, of course. There was the cheese produced in a facility that had mice and rats. There was the cheese that was recalled for risk of listeria. We had undeclared wheat in chocolate cookies and boxes of cheese crackers that actually contained peanut butter crackers, a potential life-threatening problem for those who are allergic to peanuts. Then there was the undeclared soy and wheat in ice cream. An energy drink was found to contain alcohol because the alcoholic drink was mistakenly packaged in the energy drink cans. Just regular stuff, right?

But it was another one that gave me a chill: instant coffee was found to contain ground glass.

The coffee was sold in 48 states, with only Hawaii and Alaska being left out. It wasn’t just one manufacturing lot that was affected, but three. The company was notified

by a customer and immediately issued the recall. I hate to think of the possible injuries that could be caused by drinking that coffee.

At the same time, this last week saw consumer products recalls for the charger to smartwatches because they can overheat and ignite, kids’ pajamas that don’t meet flammability standards, jewelry with excess levels of cadmium (which can cause health effects due to skin exposure), heated socks that can cause burns and blisters, a multi-tool with a blade that can cause cuts and a set of kitchen steps with a safety bar that can collapse.

Whew. It’s been busy in the recall department, and those are only from the consumer products section.

If you’d like to receive email alerts for all types of products (food, vehicles, medicine, consumer products, boats, environmental products, cosmetics), go online to www.recalls.gov and sign up. Other government websites with recalls include www.fda.gov and www.fsis.usda.gov.

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Super Crossword

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www.wtxcc.com

MAKING M ENDS ACROSS
1 "Venerable" Eng. monk
7 Place to grow cultures, for short
13 Furious with
20 "You can't get out this way"
21 Catwoman
portrayer Kitt
22 Panamanian
dictator Manuel
23 Net access
provider available on
passenger flights?
25 "Jerry Maguire"
studio
26 Petition
27 Hairy TV cousin
28 Women's garment
with an adage printed
on it?
30 Video chat
between people
stroking their dogs and
cats?
35 Sail supports
36 Gridiron divs.
37 Maiden name
preceder
38 52 weeks
41 Brewpub drink, in
brief
44 Burning
46 Situation creating
strife within a sports
squad?
50 Perfume bottle
53 Partner of Principe
55 Guarantee
56 Gulf ship
57 Chinese soup

additive
58 Hobby
60 Touring actor
representing his
kingdom?
65 Broody rock genre
66 Blast stuff
67 Starting from
68 Gymnast
Comaneci
70 Mild cheese
73 In days past
76 With 19-Down,
toaster pastry brand
78 Ransack Oregon's
capital?
83 Locale of Baylor
University
87 Time of note
88 "Laughing"
scavenger
89 Big name in train
travel
90 Hovering
ominously
94 Establish contact
(with)
95 Give a fleet
commander new
weapons?
97 Melancholy
woodwinds
99 Immigrants' class,
in brief
100 Minimally
102 Part of UNLV
103 Here, in Haiti
106 Grilling place
109 Put the notation
"this means the
opposite" next to a
word?
112 Junk email touting

wellness products?
117 It's continent
118 Razor name
119 Last king of the
united Sweden and
Norway
120 Stitched clothing
line in the Haitian
style?
125 Utterly foolish
126 Mole's path
127 Austria's capital
128 Discount item
labels
129 Nome's state
130 "Strut" singer
Sheena
DOWN
1 Lively
2 Worked hard
3 Soft caps
4 Person living
abroad, for short
5 Youngest of the
Rugrats
6 GPS guess
7 "Atlanta" actress
Zazie
8 "Same here!"
9 Spanish gold
10 British "Inc."
11 "Psst" relative
12 The Crimson Tide,
to fans
13 Dadaism, to its
critics
14 Typical situations
15 Grain to be
crushed
16 Hazards
17 Abominable
Snowman

18 Gel in a petri dish
19 See 76-Across
24 Mali neighbor
29 Dec. 24
31 Enlightens
32 No, in Berlin
33 Wise about
34 Come upon
39 Retired NBAer
Ming
40 Actress Watson
41 Language akin to
Aleut
42 Argentina's Eva
43 "_ you clever!"
44 High-speed train
name
45 Gas option in
Canada
47 Alter, as a
computer program
48 Actress de Armas
49 Suffix with Marx
50 In favor of
51 Bit of untruth
52 In the way of
54 "Son of _!"
57 Roald Dahl's
"fantastic" title animal
59 Sorority "O"
61 Kansas' capital
62 Duffer's goal
63 Academy URL
ending
64 Glass edge
69 "You said it!"
71 Most wan
72 Yucatec speakers
73 In the know
74 ESPN events
75 In base eight
77 Handheld
computer

79 Jason's ship
80 Luau garland
81 Jr. officer
82 West of "I'm No
Angel"
84 Bruins' Bobby
85 Piper's cap
86 Garden dirt
91 Refinery input
92 Lady's title
93 Rick's love in
"Casablanca"
94 Part of S&L
96 Yellow-disked
blooms
98 Siren noise
101 37-season
"Jeopardy!" host
103 Purpose
104 Writer _ de
Bergerac
105 1965 Yardbirds hit
106 Herbivore's meal
107 Heart parts
108 Object
110 Coleridge's "_
Khan"
111 Wet spots in
deserts
112 Frozen dew
113 "To be," to Horace
114 Vinegar, e.g.
115 _ part (role-play)
116 Heavy hitter
121 Viral gene material
122 _ and outs
123 "Hail!," to Horace
124 Vardalos of
"Connie and Carla"

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

by mail did have a strong partisan tilt in the COVID-19 election of 2020, in part because Trump inveighed against it.

Last year, Republicans made a concerted effort to make up ground and succeeded. They went from 24% of the mail-in vote in the must-win swing state of Pennsylvania in 2020 to 33% in 2024, and they outpaced Democrats in mail-in balloting in Arizona.

The advantage to a party of getting people to vote early – whether in person or by mail – is that it takes high-propensity voters off the table. Then, a turnout operation can focus on getting lower-propensity voters to the polls. If no one votes until Election Day, party operatives waste time and money right up to the cusp of the election, contacting people who are going to vote no matter what.

None of this is to say that all mail-in voting is equal. So-called universal mail-in voting, or automatically sending a ballot to every registered voter and scattering live ballots around a state, is a bad practice.

The rules should be more stringent. Georgia gets this right. You have to ask for an absentee ballot and provide your driver’s license number or a copy of another form of valid ID. Ballots have to be requested at least 11 days before the election and must be returned by Election Day. The outer “oath” envelope has to be properly completed or the ballot is subject to being rejected, although the county elections office will provide the voter a chance to “cure” the envelope.

It’s also important to count early and mail-in ballots quickly, something that too many states fail to do, with California – as usual – the worst offender.

States should be expected to abide by whatever rules have been set prior to an election, rather than changing them on the fly, and they should ensure that voter rolls are regularly cleaned up.

Regardless, the real question about vote-by-mail isn’t whether it is staying or going, but whether Republicans, too, will take advantage of it.

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

Metformin has limited weight loss benefits

DEAR DR. ROACH: I am a 75-year-old woman who isn’t prediabetic or diabetic. My BMI is 31.2. My doctor has prescribed a trial of metformin for weight loss as an alternative to starting Ozempic or one of the other weight-loss drugs. I have lost three pounds in a month, which is a start; exercise and healthier eating is also encouraged. What are your thoughts on this new weight-loss tool and its possible long-term success? – J.H.



Metformin, a treatment for diabetes that works mostly by preventing the liver from making sugar, isn’t new and has been used to help people lose weight for at least 20 years. While it was first shown to help people with prediabetes or diabetes, it is also effective at helping people with normal blood sugar lose weight. However, the effectiveness is modest, with most people losing around 2-3 kilograms (about 5 pounds), which is stable as long as people continue taking the medicine.

I certainly agree with the changes in lifestyle. In studies, people who adhere to a healthier diet and exercise are likely to lose more weight than people who take metformin without lifestyle changes.

I’ve had occasional patients who get motivated by the success of metformin, making it easier for them to comply with the diet and exercise changes. I’ve also had people say that the weight they lose with metformin makes it easier to exercise. Metformin is moderately successful in preventing diabetes, but it is not as effective for weight loss as approved weight-loss medicines such as semaglutide (Ozempic).

Some of my patients have read about metformin as an anti-aging drug based on animal data, and there are studies ongoing to see whether this is true in humans. I do not recommend its use for this purpose outside of a clinical trial.

DEAR DR. ROACH: I’m unable to find out from my health care provider’s clinic whether they offer a vaccine for the specific variant of COVID that is now said to be spreading. Do you know if there is a vaccine for this, and who is making it? – J.A.

The Vaccines and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee at the Food and Drug Administration recommends against a new vaccine formulation this fall, so it appears that we will be using the same vaccine as last year. Fortunately the current vaccine appears to be effective against the new NB.1.8.1 variant, which is now present in all areas that are monitored by the World Health Organization.

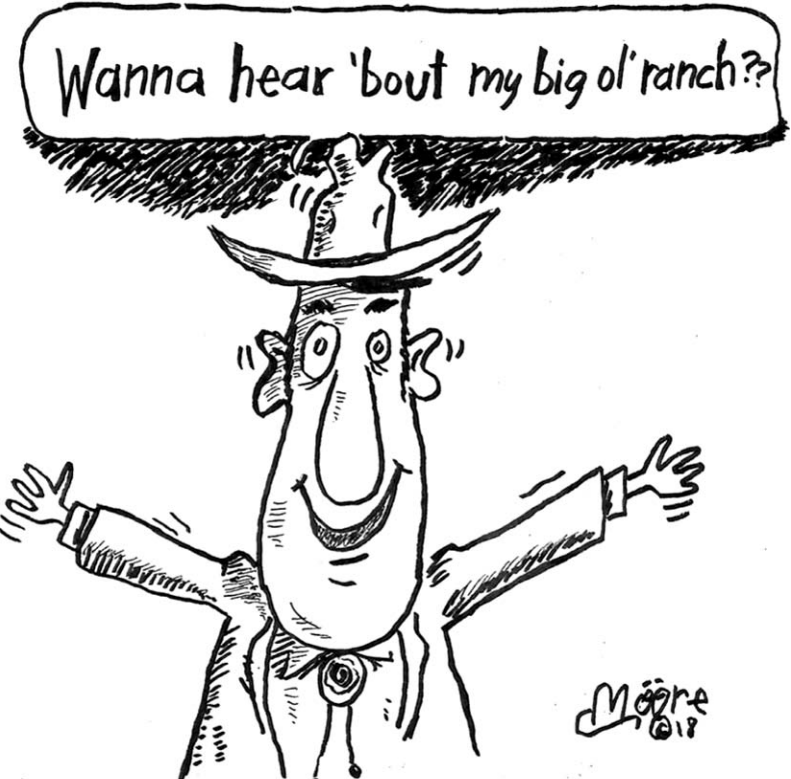
The FDA has approved a new, more-effective Moderna vaccine, but at the time of this writing, it has not yet been approved by the Centers for Disease Control. The new vaccine gives high protection with less antigens. However, the specific variants of COVID used for the vaccine will not be updated this year.

DR. ROACH WRITES:

Many readers were concerned about the advice given to a reader by his physician to use petrolatum (Vaseline) in his nose, because of a condition called exogenous lipoid pneumonia. This is a very uncommon condition but can occur when large amounts of petroleum jelly are placed in the nose, especially when the person lays down to sleep and inhales it while asleep.

This condition can be avoided by only using a thin film in the nostrils and by not doing so immediately before bed so that any excess will come out of the nose. If a small amount is swallowed, this is not dangerous as it passes through the digestive system without being absorbed.

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.



Moore Texas by Roger MOORE
“Putting on the dog” is a Texas way of saying somebody brags on himself too much.

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: C equals R

ASL QYXAE SKW CWNWC ES
YEWQI DYOW UFCI, VSLDI,
NSCOI FKP BSDFKPWCI?
“XFIECSKSQYBFD SVUWBEI.”

Answer Page 4

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Community care extended



by Freddy Groves

Veterans who receive community care for medical treatment have been required in the past to seek and receive new referrals every 90 to 180 days. Just getting that referral or authorization can cause delays in treatment. Now, with changes at the VA, those referrals won't be as frequent.

Starting now, in 30 different categories of medical care, referrals and new authorizations will only be required once a year.

Community care can literally be a lifesaver for veterans who live too far from a VA medical facility, whose closest facility doesn't provide the medical care that's required or if the VA's wait times are not acceptable.

Here are a few of the 30 medical categories that are now eligible for the longer authorization: cardiology, oncology, gastroenterology,

pain management and pulmonary.

If you've been getting community medical care and are subject to the need for frequent reauthorizations, contact the Community Care office at your closest VA medical center to ask how the new rule impacts the schedule you'll be on going forward. Ask whether the new "year" began when your current authorization period did, or whether a new year begins right now. Get the answer in writing, if you can. Take the steps you need to, to guarantee that your authorization is indeed extended so you don't discover at the last minute that there's been a problem and that your file was overlooked.

If you'd like to take advantage of community care, you need to be enrolled in VA health care or be eligible for it.

If you're getting VA care, tell your VA physician that you'd like to get community care. If they think it's appropriate, they will start a referral.

Once you find a civilian community care provider that you like, be sure to verify that they're part of the VA's network before you get any treatment from them, otherwise VA won't pay for it.

To learn more about community care or to find a provider in your area, go online to www.va.gov/communitycare.

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• Line your pots and pans with plain paper coffee filters to reduce scratches. Replace as needed.

• To keep clothing on the hanger in your closet, try the thin, velvet-lined ones. If you can't find them, add strips of rubber shelf liner to the tops of your hangers, secured with a little duct tape or safety pins.

• If you have solar lights that stick in the ground, you're going to love this: Grab one right out of the ground and flip a flower pot over, stick it into the hole in the bottom of the pot, and you've got a nice little table lamp. It's great if the power goes out!

• To sharpen scissors, fold over several layers of aluminum foil and cut into strips.

• Here's an easy and healthy way to add moisture and fiber to your burgers or meatballs: oatmeal. Add instead of package bread crumbs, which can include way too much unnecessary sugar or oils. The oats keep the meat nice and moist.

• Fruit salad can be frozen in small portions in the wells of a muffin tin. Press down and include juices. When frozen, it can be removed and the resulting frozen cups put in a freezer-safe bag for use in smoothies later.

• Tank tops or scarves can be stored on a hanger to which you've attached plastic shower rings. Simply thread the scarf or the tank straps through the ring. They make a nice presentation, and you can fit many on the same hanger.

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

GO FIGURE!

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

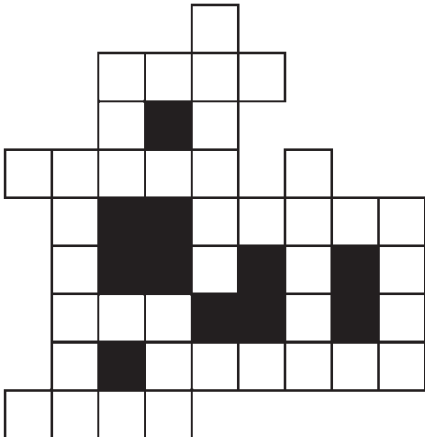
Answer Page 4

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	-		+		= 9			
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- FTO
- WYHANO
- ♥OLAYL
- ♥ETHA
- EFTBRE
- ♥AYW
- ♥EWSO
- HELTA
- ♥OHW
- LAYGER
- TFLHI
- ♥AYRW



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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Weekly SUDOKU

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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
♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

Answer Page 4

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